

**Literary Comprehension
and Appreciation Pieces**

**L. A. HILL
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Literary Comprehension and Appreciation Pieces



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INTRODUCTION

This book is the fifth stage of a series beginning with *Elementary Comprehension Pieces* (to be published by Oxford University Press in the near future), *Comprehension and Precis Pieces for Overseas Students*, *Further Comprehension and Precis Pieces* (the two latter published by Longmans Green), and *Advanced Comprehension and Appreciation Pieces* (published by Oxford University Press). It is intended for University students of English overseas, and for students studying for the Cambridge Diploma in English Studies.

The pieces in this book can be used for precis writing as well as for comprehension work: the approximate number of words is given at the end of each piece, so that students can have practice in reducing it to approximately a third of its length.

In answering the first question on each piece, it may sometimes be necessary for students to reword the context slightly before they can give equivalents of the words and phrases given. When a student does this, he should state, in his answer, what changes he has made in the context.

Question 2 on each piece asks how the meaning would be changed if certain words or phrases were to be replaced by others. There are five main types of change in these questions:

- (a) Cases where the replacement conveys a different shade

of meaning, but where it is acceptable in the context, though, of course, the meaning is altered;

(b) Cases where the replacement conveys a different shade of meaning, but where this change of meaning makes it unacceptable in the context;

(c) Cases where the replacement has practically the same denotative meaning as the word or phrase it replaces, but where there is a change in connotative meaning (i.e. a change in the 'feeling charge', the style or the atmosphere), while the replacement remains acceptable in the context;

(d) Cases where there is a connotative but not a denotative change (cf. (c), above), but where the change makes the replacement unacceptable in the context;

(e) Cases where the original word or phrase and its replacement might, at a glance, be confused with each other, usually through having some similarities of form, but where the replacement would be quite inappropriate in the context.

L. A. HILL

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1

MURDER !

SHE WIPED HER FOREHEAD, picked up the tray with the coffee and the sandwiches and biscuits, and went along the passage. The door of the front room was closed, which didn't really surprise her; it was quite possible that Steve had wanted to talk to the Colonel without her hearing what he said. . . .

She did not hear voices.

She put the tray down on a chair by the front door, hesitated, wondered whether she ought to tap, or whether to go straight in. It was absurd to think of knocking, but she did knock, almost timidly at first.

No one answered.

She tapped again, more sharply, and there was still no answer; and she could hear no sound at all. Had they gone? . . .

She flung the door open.

Well, the Colonel hadn't gone. He was leaning back in the armchair, his legs stretched out, looking as if he was fast asleep. Had Steve gone, on his own? Or was he upstairs? Susan half turned, with his name on her lips, and as she did so she caught a glimpse of something different, out of the corner of her eye; a frightening thing.

A terrifying thing.

There was a red splash on the Colonel's cheek.

It was bright red.

She stopped, and the name Steve was stifled in the back of her throat. She was still some way from the Colonel, who had slumped down in such a position that she could see only his legs and feet, one arm, which rested slackly over the side of the chair, and part of his face—his nose, his forehead, his left eye, and a little of his cheek.

She felt icily cold.

She clenched her teeth as she stood there, knowing that she ought to go forward, but dreading what she would see. In those few seconds she did not think, did not know that the colour had drained from her cheeks, leaving her eyes strangely bright and her lips almost as red as the crimson splash on the Colonel's cheek.

'Colonel,' she breathed.

'Colonel.'

'Colonel!' she shouted, and thrust herself forward, and saw the great gash at his throat.

(About 355 words)

(From: MICHAEL HALLIDAY: *Death of a Stranger*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1957.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

8 hesitated	11 timidly	37 crimson	42 gash
9 tap	24 splash	39 breathed	
10 absurd	36 drained	41 thrust	

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

4 surprise	startle
13 sharply	loudly
28 slumped	fallen
29 slackly	loosely
34 dreading	fearing

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

19 on his own; 20 with his name on her lips; 21 caught a glimpse of; 26 the name Steve was stifled in the back of her throat; 33 clenched her teeth.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What was the girl expecting to find in the front room as she approached the door?

(b) Why was there no answer when she knocked at the door?

(c) What did she at first think was the reason for there being no answer?

(d) Why was Steve's name on Susan's lips as she half turned?

(e) Why did she not utter Steve's name?

(f) What was the red splash on the Colonel's cheek?

(g) Why was it there?

(h) Why did the girl's lips appear so red?

(i) Why did she wait several seconds before thrusting herself forward?

5. The writer of this piece begins on a calm, peaceful note of normality; then he introduces a note of tension, followed by a relaxation of tension; then the atmosphere suddenly changes to one of horror, which builds up gradually until there is a sudden climax. Trace these steps in the piece, and show what techniques the writer uses to achieve his effects (e.g. 'A terrifying thing' echoes 'a frightening thing', and appears as a new paragraph on its own).

2

THE END OF A BURNING SHIP

BETWEEN THE DARKNESS OF EARTH and heaven she was burning fiercely upon a disc of purple sea shot by the blood-red play of gleams; upon a disc of water glittering and sinister. A high, clear flame, an immense and lonely flame, ascended from the ocean, and from its summit the black smoke poured continuously at the sky. She burned furiously; mournful and imposing like a funeral pile kindled in the night, surrounded by the sea, watched over by the stars. A magnificent death had come like a grace, like a gift, like a reward to that old ship at the end of her laborious days. The surrender of her weary ghost to the keeping of stars and sea was stirring like the sight of a glorious triumph. The masts fell just before daybreak, and for a moment there was a burst and turmoil of sparks that seemed to fill with flying fire the night patient and watchful, the vast night lying silent upon the sea. At daylight she was only a charred shell, floating still under a cloud of smoke and bearing a glowing mass of coal within.

Then the oars were got out, and the boats forming in a line moved round her remains as if in procession—the long-boat leading. As we pulled across her stern a slim dart of fire shot out viciously at us, and suddenly she went down, head first, in a great hiss of steam. The unconsumed stern was the last to sink; but the paint had gone, had cracked, had peeled off, and there were no letters, there was no word, no

stubborn device that was like her soul, to flash at the rising sun her creed and her name.

(About 290 words)

(From: JOSEPH CONRAD: *Youth*, 1902.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

2	fiercely	7	funeral pile	22	viciously
3	disc	9	grace	26	stubborn device
4	sinister	11	weary		
7	mournful	16	charred shell		

2. Here are ten words and phrases from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

3	glittering	shining	14	turmoil	rush
7	imposing	striking	15	vast	long
7	kindled	raised	17	glowing	burning
10	laborious	working	21	a slim dart of fire	a flame
12	stirring	moving	23	unconsumed	unburnt

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

2 shot by the blood-red play of gleams; 19 forming in a line; 21 pulled across her stern; 25 peeled off; 26 to flash at the rising sun her creed and her name.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) Why does the writer speak of a *disc* of water?

(b) What is the significance of the use of *at* rather than *towards* in 'poured continuously at the sky'?

(c) What do we learn from this piece about the ship's history before she caught fire?

(d) The writer of this piece interprets what most people would regard as a disaster as just the opposite. How does he do this?

(e) The interpretation mentioned in (d) above is in contrast, in this piece, with a general atmosphere of sadness and ominousness. Give as many examples as you can of how this atmosphere is created.

5. One of the devices used by the writer of this piece to achieve effects is that of parallelism (e.g. 'like a grace, like a gift, like a reward'). Give as many examples of this as you can find and show what effects each produces.

6. Another of the devices the writer uses is unusual word-order (e.g. 'that seemed to fill with flying fire the night patient and watchful'). Give as many examples of this as you can, and show what effects each of them produces.

7. The writer of this piece gives natural objects a personality (e.g. he calls the night 'patient and watchful'). Give as many examples of this as you can, and show how each contributes to the atmosphere of the piece.

3

PIP

MY FATHER'S FAMILY NAME being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister—Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, '*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above*', I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine—who gave up trying to get a living exceedingly early in that universal struggle—I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as

the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this
 30 bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the
 35 dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small
 40 bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.

(About 405 words)

(From: CHARLES DICKENS: *Great Expectations*, 1860-61.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

3 explicit	13 character and turn	27 identity of things
8 likeness	16 freckled	30 bleak
11 derived	26 wound	34 aforesaid
12 odd	26 vivid	35 intersected
13 stout	27 broad	38 savage lair

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

10 fancies	ideas
21 entertained	held
28 raw	cold
31 late	recently
37 leaden	grey

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

4 came to be; 5 on the authority of; 15 drew a childish conclusion; 20 indebted for; 23 in this state of existence.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What were Pip's full names?

(b) Why did he come to be called Pip?

(c) How did he know that his surname was Pirrip?

(d) Why did he not know what his parents really looked like?

(e) Why did he think that his father was a broad, stout, dark man with curly black hair?

(f) Why did he think his mother was freckled and sickly?

(g) Why did he think that his brothers had been born lying on their backs and that they had kept their hands in their pockets all their lives?

(h) What do we know about the distance from Pip's home to the sea as the crow flies?

(i) The writer of this piece gives examples of things that Pip gained an impression of the identity of on the raw afternoon he mentions. What are these things?

(j) Why was Pip 'a bundle of shivers'?

5. The atmosphere of this piece is one of grimness and pathos. Show how the writer of the piece achieves these effects by his choice of language.

6. What use does the writer of this piece make of humour?

7. The writer of this piece makes use, from time to time, of formal, official language such as 'late of this parish'. What effect does this have on the atmosphere of the piece?

4

AN EARLY BATHE

UNLESS YOU ARE USED TO IT, an April morning is not the best time for plunging into cold flowing water. Anthony, sitting on the edge of his bed, with a hand absently fondling the ears of Cerberus, was wondering whether, in his answer
5 to Mr. Pordage's letter, he should point out that, though a morning bath was referred to as something customary, his habit was to bathe in warm water once a week, on Saturday nights. However, he didn't want to start his life at Easter
How with disobedience, so he pulled off his warm nightshirt,
10 put on a mackintosh that made him shiver, and ran out to the head of the steps. He called to Cerberus, who opened one eye, gave him a knowing wink, and got his head down again between his paws.

The stone stairway was wet with dew, and cold. Anthony's naked toes curled and he stepped gingerly. But the
15 sun was shining upon the daffodils, and the blackbirds and thrushes were full-throated in the hawthorn hedge. It was half past seven. The bleat of lambs came from the surrounding fields, and too high to be seen, larks were in the sky from
20 which the sun had not yet burned the last mists of the night.

Anthony stood still, listening, and he could hear the clear voice of the water, a silvery constant thread on which all the other sounds of the day were hanging. Suddenly, he was
hearing nothing in particular, but everything was one thing,
25 himself a part of it: the strengthening sunlight, and the

flowers, and the birdsong, and the deep troubled voices of the ewes answering the quavering lambs, and the ripple of the stream, and Valpy snorting in the barn: and he ran down the stairs and across the lawn and along the edge of the water, his toes rejoicing now in the clear diamond wet- 30
ness of the grass and his eyes in the golden blobs of water-buttercups—cups indeed, full to the brim with dew. And here were the alders enclosing what Mr. Pordage called his Parson's Pleasure, where the stream deepened to a pool, and hazels were among the alders, dropping from their 35
boughs gold-dusted catkins, drying in the sunlight like the tails of new-dropped lambs.

He threw off his mackintosh and dived, and his fingers were at once among the pebbly nuggets that made the stream-bed an eldorado. He came up with a handful, gasp- 40
ing, for the water was as cold as though it were the sweat of a glacier, and he stood, dripping and shivering, while Cerberus, who had at last decided to follow, stood by, his red tongue protruding, laughing in derision, as if he realised, what only now occurred to Anthony, that he had come with- 45
out a towel. Well, that was something to remember next time, the boy thought, wringing water from his hair, and this first time was something to remember, too. He put on his mackintosh, went back to his room, and towelled him-
self till he glowed. Never, he thought, have I till now 50
started a day like this; and the memory came to him of the rush downstairs in Megson Street, and the rush through breakfast, with Uncle Horace coughing from some imagined catarrh, or writhing from some imagined lumbago; and then the rush to school, and the school-bell ringing, and 55
the calling of the register.

(About 580 words)

(From: HOWARD SPRING: *Time and the Hour*, Collins, 1957.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

2 plunging	36 gold-dusted	44 derision
3 fondling	37 new-dropped	45 occurred
12 knowing	40 eldorado	50 glowed
26 troubled	41 sweat	53 imagined
31 blobs	44 protruding	54 writhing

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

10 shiver	tremble
15 gingerly	carefully
17 full-throated	noisy
27 quavering	trembling
47 wringing	shaking

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

22 a silvery constant thread; 24 everything was one thing, himself a part of it; 34 where the stream deepened to a pool; 39 pebbly nuggets; 56 the calling of the register.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What had Mr. Pordage's letter told Anthony to do?

(b) What is the disobedience the writer refers to?

(c) In what way did Anthony's feelings change when he got outside?

(d) In which part of the river did Anthony bathe?

(e) What did Anthony think he ought to remember the next time he bathed?

(f) What was the Cerberus in this piece?

(g) What sort of person was Uncle Horace?

5. In this piece the writer shows the impact of a beautiful April morning on a boy. He describes impressions which came through

the eye, the ear and the skin. Show how, by his choice of words, the writer (a) gives us an impression of the beauty of what the boy sees and hears (e.g. the use of *nuggets*, with its suggestion of gold, to describe pebbles); and (b) makes the boy's sensations of warmth and cold real for us (e.g. the curling of his toes). How do the last seven lines of the piece help the impression of beauty given by the second and third paragraphs?

6. Both this piece and 'Unexpected Sunset' (Piece 17) give us sequences of sensations and mingled emotions. Contrast the impressionistic treatment of these in 'An Early Bathe' with the realistic and dramatic treatment in 'Unexpected Sunset'.

5

THE BARBER

HE GOT HIS JOB WHEN HE WAS SIXTEEN. He was then a well-grown boy big enough to pass for the eighteen which he said he was, with a mop of curly fair hair the luxuriance of which had encouraged him to enter his trade. He was
5 fond of reading poetry and on Sundays—in those days a barber worked six days a week—he made pilgrimages to the various places which were connected with the poets he was at the time interested in. He visited Chalfont St. Giles while he was reading *Paradise Lost*; he had seen the birth-
10 place of Keats and the house in which Coleridge had lived; he went to Stoke Poges and wandered in the churchyard which had suggested Gray's *Elegy*. He had a delightful and naïve enthusiasm. All his spare money he spent on books. He had his midday meal at an A.B.C.¹ and while he
15 ate his scone and butter and drank a glass of milk he thumbed a precious volume. It was at an A.B.C. that he first saw the young lady who afterwards became his wife. She worked in a dress-maker's shop in Dover Street. Then he had a son. While he was courting her his wife had admired
20 him because he was so well-read, but when they were married it made her impatient to see him constantly poring over a book. When he got back from his work and they had eaten their supper she wanted him to take her out for a walk or go to the pictures. They had been married for seven or
25 eight years when the war broke out. He enlisted, and by the

influence of one of the men whom he had shaved habitually
was sent out to Russia with armoured cars. He was away
for the duration of the war. The end of it found him in
Rumania. At last he came back and returned to his job. He
was a young man still. He was thirty-three. The prospect of
cutting hair and shaving chins for the rest of his life dis- 30
mayed him, but he did not know what else to do. That was
all he knew, how to shave chins and cut hair. His wife
thought he ought to be thankful to have a good job to come
back to. He did not get on so well with her as he had done 35
before he went away. She thought him crotchety and fanci-
ful. He was impatient because she was so well satisfied with
the life she led. He saw that he would never escape from the
necessity of earning a decent living so that he could support
her and the boy. The boy was ten now. He began to loathe 40
his customers. I asked him if he still read. He shook his
head. 'What's the good?' he said. 'It'll never get me any-
where.' 'It'll take you out of yourself,' I replied. 'Perhaps it
will. But I've always got to come back.' He had only one
thing left, the determination to give his son the freedom 45
that was denied to himself. He was beaten, he had no longer
any hope; but savagely, vindictively, he looked forward to
his son revenging him vicariously for the loss of his own
illusions. When his son grew up he went into the hairdress-
ing business, but for ladies, because it pays better. 50

(About 565 words)

(From: W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM: *A Writer's Notebook*, 1949.)

¹ A.B.C. = Aerated Bread Company restaurant.

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

3 mop	30 prospect	47 vindictively
6 pilgrimages	36 crotchety	48 vicariously
19 courting	40 loathe	
25 enlisted	46 beaten	

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

2 well-grown	grown-up	31 dismayed	frightened
3 luxuriance	luxury	36 fanciful	imaginative
13 naïve	simple	39 decent	honest
16 thumbed	fingered	46 denied	forbidden
16 precious	expensive	49 illusions	dreams

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

2 to pass for the eighteen which he said he was; 21 poring over; 28 for the duration of; 43 take you out of yourself; 50 it pays better.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What does the writer of this piece give as one reason why the person he is writing about became a barber?

(b) What was the barber's hobby?

(c) Why did his wife not like his reading poetry?

(d) Does the writer suggest that the barber was glad to go to Russia with armoured cars, or that he was sorry?

(e) Give two reasons why the person the writer is writing about in this piece went back to his old job after the war.

(f) How had his character changed?

(g) The barber's character was quite the opposite of his wife's. What adjective could a person who preferred the barber's character to his wife's use to describe his character? What adjective could he use to describe his wife's? What adjective could a

person who preferred his wife's character use to describe her character? What adjective could he use to describe the barber's?

(h) Why did the barber stop reading poetry?

(i) What was his only hope, and how was that disappointed?

(j) How did the fact that the barber married affect his life?

5. Point out the examples of irony in this little tale.

6. This story gives an impression of artless simplicity, partly by the introduction of irrelevant matter (e.g. the fact that the barber was in Rumania at the end of the war). Give as many examples as you can find of this introduction of irrelevant matter.

7. In what other ways is the impression of simplicity achieved?

6

THE EARTHQUAKE

DURING MY STAY AT RURÚKAN my curiosity was satisfied by experiencing a pretty sharp earthquake-shock. On the evening of June 29th, at a quarter after eight, as I was sitting reading, the house began shaking with a very gentle, but
5 rapidly increasing motion. I sat still enjoying the novel sensation for some seconds; but in less than half a minute it became strong enough to shake me in my chair, and to make the house visibly rock about, and creak and crack as if it would fall to pieces. Then began a cry throughout the
10 village of 'Tana goyang! tana goyang!' (Earthquake! earthquake!) Everybody rushed out of their houses—women screamed and children cried—and I thought it prudent to go out too. On getting up, I found my head giddy and my steps unsteady, and could hardly walk without falling. The
15 shock continued about a minute, during which time I felt as if I had been turned round and round, and was almost seasick. Going into the house again, I found a lamp and a bottle of arrack upset. The tumbler which formed the lamp had been thrown out of the saucer in which it had stood. The
20 shock appeared to be nearly vertical, rapid, vibratory, and jerking. It was sufficient, I have no doubt, to have thrown down brick chimneys and walls and church towers; but as the houses here are all low, and strongly framed of timber, it is impossible for them to be much injured, except by a
25 shock that would utterly destroy a European city. The

people told me it was ten years since they had had a stronger shock than this, at which time many houses were thrown down and some people killed.

At intervals of ten minutes to half an hour, slight shocks and tremors were felt, sometimes strong enough to send us all out again. There was a strange mixture of the terrible and the ludicrous in our situation. We might at any moment have a much stronger shock, which would bring down the house over us, or—what I feared more—cause a landslide, and send us down into the deep ravine on the very edge of which the village is built; yet I could not help laughing each time we ran out at a slight shock, and then in a few moments ran in again. The sublime and the ridiculous were here literally but a step apart. On the one hand, the most terrible and destructive of natural phenomena was in action around us—the rocks, the mountains, the solid earth were trembling and convulsed, and we were utterly impotent to guard against the danger that might at any moment overwhelm us. On the other hand was the spectacle of a number of men, women, and children running in and out of their houses, on what each time proved a very unnecessary alarm, as each shock ceased just as it became strong enough to frighten us. It seemed really very much like ‘playing at earthquakes’, and made many of the people join me in a hearty laugh, even while reminding each other that it really might be no laughing matter.

(About 535 words)

(From: ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE: *The Malay Archipelago*, Macmillan and Co., 1868.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

2 pretty	16 sea-sick	30 tremors	42 impotent
8 creak	18 tumbler	34 landslip	43 overwhelm
8 crack	20 vibratory	35 ravine	47 ceased
13 giddy	25 utterly	42 convulsed	

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

5 novel	new
12 prudent	wise
21 jerking	pulsating
32 ludicrous	absurd
44 spectacle	sight

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

23 strongly framed of timber; 38 The sublime and the ridiculous were here literally but a step apart; 40 natural phenomena; 48 playing at earthquakes; 51 no laughing matter.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What had the writer of this piece been curious about before he had the experience which he recounts in this piece?

(b) What emotions passed through the writer during the first shock?

(c) What were the writer's various physical sensations during the first shock?

(d) Why did the village houses withstand the shock better than a European city would have done?

(e) What was terrible about the writer's situation and that of the villagers?

(f) What was ludicrous about their situation?

(g) What was the *sublime* the writer mentions, and what was the *ridiculous*?

(h) What was the natural phenomenon the writer refers to in his last paragraph?

(i) In what way did the alarm the writer mentions prove unnecessary?

(j) Why did many of the villagers join the writer in a hearty laugh?

5. In the first paragraph of this piece, the reader gets the impression that the writer was a cool-headed man with a great interest in exact and accurate observation. Show how this impression is conveyed by what the writer writes in this first paragraph.

6. In his second paragraph, the writer makes his story more dramatic by alternately stressing the danger and the humour of the situation. Trace how he does this.

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JAZZ

- IT USED TO BE CUSTOMARY in the 1920s in intellectual circles to talk of jazz as 'the music of the future', the one whose rhythm and clang reproduced the quintessential sound and movement of the machine age, the robots' melody. Admittedly such statements were normally made by people who had rarely been inside a twentieth-century factory or heard any jazz which we would today recognise as such. Nevertheless this does not excuse their almost total irrelevance.
- 10 For in the first place, the very essence of jazz is that it is *not* standardised or mass-produced music (though jazz-influenced popular music is), and in the second place jazz has very little connexion with modern industry. Indeed, the one negro ghetto which comes closest to being a pure factory community, Detroit, is the one which has produced an
- 15 abnormally small number of good jazz musicians. The only machine which jazz has ever tried to imitate in sound is the railway train which is, throughout American folk-music of the past century, a universal and most important symbol of
- 20 the multiple kind welcomed by the literary analysts, but *never* a symbol of mechanisation. On the contrary, as scores of railway blues demonstrate, it is a symbol of movement which brings personal freedom:

25 Gonna catch myself a train fifteen coaches long,
 When you look for me, baby, I'll be gone.

It is a symbol of the flux of life, and therefore of fate:

Two-nineteen took my babe away,
Two-seventeen will bring her back some day.

It is a symbol of tragedy and death, as in the numerous songs about railroad disasters and the suicide blues: 30

Gonna lay my head on that old railroad line
And let the two-fifteen pacify my min'.

Of yearning and grief: 'How I hate to hear that freight train go boo-hoo'; of the labour in building it, as in the great ballad of John Henry; of male power in the running of it; of sex, as in Bessie Smith's 'Casey Jones'. Indeed, the most usual use of mechanical metaphors in jazz—e.g. telephones and cars—is for sexual symbolism: 'Got Ford movements in my hips'. The railroad is a symbol of man's journey to paradise or perdition, as in numerous negro sermons ('The Gospel Train'). Jazz players, especially blues pianists, have reproduced the sound and sensation of this, the only product of the industrial revolution to have been fully absorbed into poetry and music, with uncanny power, as in Meade Lux Lewis's 'Honky Tonk Train Blues' or Red Nelson-Clarence Lofton's 'Streamline Train'. But if this reflects any phase of industrialisation, it is not the mass production of the twentieth century but the unmechanised society of the late nineteenth. There is nothing in 'railroad jazz' which could not have been created in the 1890s. 35 40 45 50

(About 470 words)

(From: FRANCIS NEWTON: *The Jazz Scene*, Macgibbon & Kee, 1959.)



QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

3 reproduced	11 mass-produced	40 perdition
3 quintessential	14 ghetto	42 sensation
8 excuse	18 throughout	44 uncanny
10 essence	19 universal	47 reflects
11 standardised	22 demonstrate	47 phase

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

3 clang	crash
16 abnormally	unusually
26 flux	flow
33 yearning	eagerness
48 unmechanised	unmechanical

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

1 intellectual circles; 4 the robots' melody; 7 recognise as such; 8 almost total irrelevance; 19 symbol of the multiple kind; 20 literary analysts; 21 a symbol of mechanisation; 22 railway blues; 30 the suicide blues; 44 fully absorbed into.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- (a) Who called jazz 'the music of the future'?
- (b) Why did these people call jazz by this name?
- (c) Why does the writer of this piece think this name the wrong one for jazz?
- (d) What caused this wrong name to be given to jazz, according to the writer?
- (e) How does the information about the Detroit ghetto help the writer's argument?
- (f) How do railway blues disprove the arguments of those who call jazz 'the music of the future', and how do they prove the writer's arguments?

- (g) What products of industrialisation does jazz deal with in addition to the railway train, according to the writer?
- (h) How does the writer use the information which is the subject of question (g) to support his own argument?
- (i) What does the writer say that Meade Lux Lewis and Red Nelson-Clarence Lofton have done?
- (j) What kinds of industrialisation does the writer distinguish between? How does he use this distinction to support his arguments?

5. The writer of this piece says that the railway train is a 'universal and most important symbol of the multiple kind'. He enumerates eight things of which it is a symbol, and mentions one thing of which it is *not*. What are these things?

6. Give, as far as possible in your own words, the meaning of the four quotations from railway blues that the writer includes in this piece. Show how each of these quotations illustrates some point he is trying to make.

7. This is a highly argumentative piece, in which the writer sets out to demolish a belief that he does not share. To do this, he uses logical argument, ridicule, statistics and quotations. Several times he introduces pieces of information that might appear to provide evidence against his argument, but each time he turns these pieces of information to his advantage. Trace how he does all these things.

8

SLEEPLESSNESS

HE FLUNG TO THE OTHER SIDE of the bed. He felt suffocated by the heat of the bedroom. He had turned off the radiator and opened the window but still it was too warm. The overheating of the hotels was one of the trying things
5 about a town.

Resolutely he lay on his back. He pictured the little church at home, the first snowfall lying in the churchyard. He pictured the family plot, where those who had given themselves to so many emotions now lay at peace. The snow lay
10 lightly on the graves. Too lightly, for it did nothing to restrain those within. A restless movement ran through their bones. In frantic haste his spirit fled from the place. He pressed his fingers to his temples. Was it possible that he was going to have one of those attacks of pain in his head
15 and neck which once before had nearly wrecked him? He gently massaged the back of his neck. He looked at his watch. Just twenty minutes had passed since last he had looked at it. He could not go on like this. He took one of the tablets in a gulp of water and settled down to let it work its
20 beneficent will. But he was so thoroughly awake that the tablet took some time to soothe him. In truth his imagination seemed more terribly alive. He felt himself playing Bach's Italian Concerto in F major. But he could not control the black keys. The white keys behaved themselves, doing
25 his bidding, but the black keys raced away from under his

fingers like ants. He wondered why the thought of ants was so intolerable to him. There was some painful scene in his memory connected with ants but he could not recall what it was. Now the black keys had run right away from the keyboard, scuttled down the legs of the piano, and were clambering up the legs of the bed. They were running this way and that over the bedspread. Finch stretched out his hand and turned on the light. He took another tablet, for he must be fit to play that night. He remembered that he was in Oregon and that the Pacific was near. That was a calming thought. He pictured the endless rolling of the waves. He tried to repeat poetry about the sea but the poems eluded him. One line from some forgotten poem went on and on in his brain—'Hateful is the dark-blue sky.' Over and over it was reiterated till he felt nothing, could see nothing but that dark-blue arch burning above him. 'Hateful is the dark-blue sky.' Not since boyhood had he remembered the words—beautiful and menacing. . . .

(About 455 words)

(From: M. DE LA ROCHE: *Return to Jalna*, Macmillan, 1948.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

1 flung	8 given themselves	27 intolerable
1 suffocated	11 restrain	28 recall
4 trying	15 wrecked	31 clambering
6 pictured	16 massaged	38 eluded
8 plot	19 gulp	43 menacing

2. Here are five words and phrases from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

6	resolutely	bravely
9	at peace	dead
21	soothe	calm
30	scuttled	ran
40	reiterated	repeated

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

12 In frantic haste; 19 settled down; 19 let it work its beneficent will; 24 doing his bidding; 31 this way and that.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- (a) What is the name of the person this piece is about?
- (b) What *physical* cause of his sleeplessness is mentioned?
- (c) What *mental* cause of his sleeplessness is suggested?
- (d) What did he do *physically* to try to calm his nerves?
- (e) What did he do *mentally* to try to calm his nerves? Why did this fail each time?
- (f) Why was it important that he should get some rest on this particular occasion?
- (g) What musical instrument do you think he was going to play that night?

5. Show how the writer of this piece creates an atmosphere of nervous strain in it.

9

PARKINSON'S LAW

WORK EXPANDS SO AS TO FILL the time available for its completion.¹ General recognition of this fact is shown in the proverbial phrase, 'It is the busiest man who has time to spare'. Thus, an elderly lady of leisure can spend the entire day in writing and dispatching a postcard to her niece at Bognor Regis. An hour will be spent in finding the postcard, 5 another in hunting for spectacles, half an hour in a search for the address, an hour and a quarter in composition, and twenty minutes in deciding whether or not to take an umbrella when going to the pillar box in the next street. The 10 total effort that would occupy a busy man for three minutes all told may in this fashion leave another person prostrate after a day of doubt, anxiety, and toil.

Granted that work (and especially paper-work) is thus elastic in its demands on time, it is manifest that there need 15 be little or no relationship between the work to be done and the size of the staff to which it may be assigned. A lack of real activity does not, of necessity, result in leisure. A lack of occupation is not necessarily revealed by a manifest idleness. The thing to be done swells in importance and com- 20 plexity in a direct ratio with the time to be spent. This fact is widely recognized, but less attention has been paid to its wider implications, more especially in the field of public administration. Politicians and taxpayers have assumed (with occasional phases of doubt) that a rising total in the 25

number of civil servants must reflect a growing volume of work to be done. Cynics, in questioning this belief, have imagined that the multiplication of officials must have left some of them idle or all of them able to work for shorter
 30 hours. But this is a matter in which faith and doubt seem equally misplaced. The fact is that the number of the officials and the quantity of the work are not related to each other at all. The rise in the total of those employed is governed by Parkinson's Law and would be much the same whether
 35 the volume of the work were to increase, diminish, or even disappear.

(About 375 words)

(From: C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON: *Parkinson's Law, or The Pursuit of Progress*, John Murray, 1958.)

¹ This is what the author of this piece calls 'Parkinson's Law'.

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

4 entire	18 of necessity	27 cynics
13 toil	24 assumed	27 questioning
14 paper-work	25 phases	28 multiplication
15 manifest	26 reflect	31 misplaced
17 assigned	26 volume	35 diminish

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

5 dispatching	sending
12 prostrate	tired
14 granted	assuming
19 occupation	employment
23 implications	applications

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

4 an elderly lady of leisure; 12 all told; 12 in this fashion; 21 in a direct ratio with; 23 in the field of.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) How does the proverbial phrase quoted by the writer of this piece show 'general recognition' of Parkinson's Law?

(b) How does the story about the elderly lady of leisure illustrate Parkinson's Law?

(c) What does the writer of this piece mean when he says that work is 'elastic in its demands on time'?

(d) What does he mean when he says, 'A lack of real activity does not . . . result in leisure'?

(e) What does he mean when he says, 'A lack of occupation is not necessarily revealed by a manifest idleness'?

(f) What does he mean when he says, 'The thing to be done swells in importance and complexity in a direct ratio with the time to be spent'?

(g) Why are people who think that 'a rising total in the number of civil servants must reflect a growing volume of work to be done' wrong?

(h) Why are people who think that 'the multiplication of officials must have left some of them idle or all of them able to work for shorter hours' wrong?

5. Explain Parkinson's Law in your own words.

6. In this piece, the writer is half serious, half indulging in comic exaggeration. Distinguish where he is probably serious, and where he is mainly amusing.

10

AN OVERSEAS AUDIENCE

HIS MIND DRIFTED BACK to the time when he had been too hard up to resist an invitation to Birmingham, where some foreign persons needed to be addressed on 'CONTEMPORARY BRITISH NOVELISTS (vi): Graham Greene'. There was
5 a brief prelude in an underground canteen with fluorescent-strip lighting and lino; the coffee was the prescriptive liquorice with a lacing of varnish. Surrounded by blue-eyed, tanned young men in open-necked shirts, slim-waisted girls with white blouses and no make-up, and a selection of
10 middle-aged bit-players from French films, he felt several times like apologizing for the inroads which both *décor* and victuals must be making upon these sensitive continental psyches. But they all chattered away gaily, even a little loudly, throwing down the horrible draught with abandon
15 and stubbing out their cigarettes on the barbaric wooden tables in a spirit of careless ease. Two of them had addressed him in English, and he had answered them, for he saw it as his duty to help foreign guests practise being in Great Britain. The only bad moment came on the way upstairs,
20 when he caught sight of a figure in priest's garb and 'Christ, a Jesuit' was his panicked thought. But a snatch of Dublin drollery, audible an instant later, calmed him.

The lecture was all right. After it there was talk of the views, the attitudes, the obsessions, the values of Grim-Grin.
25 One question seemed at first to relate to the face of Grim-

Grin, and he was at a loss to frame an answer until they all assured him that the fellow was really on about the faith of Grim-Grin. Bowen gave them the treatment on that. Then a woman with a lot of beads said:

'We have been hearing of your Grim-Grin and his *Power and the Glory*.' 30

He agreed that this was the fact.

'But we have been surprised that we have not been hearing of your Edge-Crown.'

'Oh, really?' He searched his brain frantically. Grim-Grin he had been ready for, together with Ifflen-Voff, Zumzit-Mum and Shem-Shoice. This was new. 'Could you amplify that a little?' He ran through the possible variants—Adj-, Ash-, Each-, Age- . . . Some foreigner? But no; it had been *his* Edge-Crown. 35 40

'Sickies of sickingdom,' the woman explained irritably.

'Yes . . . of course . . . Well . . . ' He began nodding his head with little hope of ever having reason to stop.

After a brief explanatory uproar he was enabled to wonder aloud what had led his questioner to detect a resemblance between *The Power and the Glory* and *The Keys of the Kingdom* by A. J. Cronin. 'I think I've done enough talking for a bit,' he added, smiling hard and turning his face slowly to and fro for everyone to see, in the hope of suggesting that he was not to be taken altogether seriously. 45 50

'Perhaps one of you would like to have a shot at that.'

One of them at once did, saying in a baritone growl: 'There is a priest in both.'

(About 515 words)

(From: KINGSLEY AMIS: *I Like it Here*, Victor Gollancz, 1958.)



QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

8 tanned	12 victuals	27 assured
10 bit-players	14 draught	38 amplify
11 inroads	20 garb	
11 <i>décor</i>	26 frame	

2. Here are five words and phrases from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by the one opposite it on the right?

1 drifted	went
13 psyches	souls
14 with abandon	carelessly
21 panicked	fearful
35 frantically	eagerly

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

2 hard up; 5 a brief prelude; 6 the prescriptive liquorice with a lacing of varnish; 14 throwing down; 15 stubbing out; 21 a snatch of Dublin drollery; 26 at a loss to; 27 on about; 28 gave them the treatment on that; 51 have a shot at.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) Did Bowen want to go to Birmingham? If not, why did he go? What was he to do in Birmingham?

(b) What was Bowen's opinion about the *décor* and the victuals in the canteen?

(c) What was the reaction of Bowen's audience to the *décor* and the victuals in the canteen?

(d) How did Bowen misjudge his audience's psyches?

(e) Do you think there were any real bit-players from French films in the canteen? If not, why did Bowen say there were?

(f) Why did Bowen panic when he caught sight of the figure in

priest's garb, do you think? What calmed him after this, and why did it calm him?

(g) Why was Bowen at first at a loss to frame an answer to the question on Graham Greene's faith? What finally enabled him to do so?

(h) How did Bowen try to gain time while puzzling over the meaning of 'Edge-Crown' and 'sickies of sickingdom'?

(i) Why did Bowen hope to suggest that he was not to be taken altogether seriously?

(j) How did Bowen avoid having to answer the question about *The Keys of the Kingdom*?

5. Who are 'Grim-Grin', 'Edge-Crown', 'Ifflen-Voff', 'Zum-zit-Mum' and 'Shem-Shoice'? What is 'sickies of sickingdom'?

6. This piece reveals a number of misunderstandings between Bowen and his foreign audience both before and after his lecture. Which of these misunderstandings are the results of linguistic difficulties; which are the results of differences in literary judgments; and which are the results of a different set of values? Explain what these different values are.

7. Show how the writer of this piece uses humour (a) at Bowen's expense, and (b) at the expense of members of his audience.

11

THE WINE SHOP

A LARGE CASK OF WINE had been dropped and broken, in the street. The accident had happened in getting it out of a cart; the cask had tumbled out with a run, the hoops had burst, and it lay on the stones just outside the door of the wine-shop, shattered like a walnut-shell.

All the people within reach had suspended their business, or their idleness, to run to the spot and drink the wine. The rough, irregular stones of the street, pointing every way, and designed, one might have thought, expressly to lame all living creatures that approached them, had dammed it into little pools; these were surrounded, each by its own jostling group or crowd, according to its size. Some men kneeled down, made scoops of their two hands joined, and sipped, or tried to help women, who bent over their shoulders, to sip, before the wine had all run out between their fingers. Others, men and women, dipped in the puddles with little mugs of mutilated earthenware, or even with handkerchiefs from women's heads, which were squeezed dry into infants' mouths; others made small mud embankments, to stem the wine as it ran; others, directed by lookers-on up at high windows, darted here and there, to cut off little streams of wine that started away in new directions; others devoted themselves to the sodden and leedied pieces of the cask, licking, and even champing the moister wine-rotted fragments with eager relish. There was

no drainage to carry off the wine, and not only did it all get taken up, but so much mud got taken up along with it, that there might have been a scavenger in the street, if anybody acquainted with it could have believed in such a miraculous presence.

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A shrill sound of laughter and of amused voices—voices of men, women, and children—resounded in the street while this wine game lasted. There was little roughness in the sport, and much playfulness. There was a special companionship in it, an observable inclination on the part of every one to join some other one, which led, especially among the luckier or lighter-hearted, to frolicsome embraces, drinking of healths, shaking of hands, and even joining of hands and dancing, a dozen together. When the wine was gone, and the places where it had been most abundant were raked into a gridiron-pattern by fingers, these demonstrations ceased, as suddenly as they had broken out. The man who had left his saw sticking in the firewood he was cutting, set it in motion again; the woman who had left on a door-step the little pot of hot ashes, at which she had been trying to soften the pain in her own starved fingers and toes, or in those of her child, returned to it; men with bare arms, matted locks, and cadaverous faces, who had emerged into the winter light from cellars, moved away, to descend again; and a gloom gathered on the scene that appeared more natural to it than sunshine.

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The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many wooden shoes. The hands of the man who sawed the wood, left red marks on the billets; and the forehead of the woman who nursed her baby, was stained with the stain of the old rag she wound about her head again. Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had acquired a tigerish smear

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about the mouth; and one tall joker so besmirched, his head more out of a long squalid bag of a night-cap than in it, scrawled upon a wall with his finger dipped in muddy wine-lees—BLOOD.

- 65 The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there.

(About 675 words)

(From: CHARLES DICKENS: *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

9 expressly	23 sodden	57 billets
9 lame	23 lee-dyed	61 besmirched
20 embankments	28 scavenger	
20 stem	32 resounded	

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

5 shattered	broken	21 darted	ran
6 suspended	stopped	24 champing	chewing
12 jostling	pushing	31 shrill	loud
14 sipped	drank	48 cadaverous	deathly
17 mutilated	broken	63 scrawled	scratched

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

3 tumbled out with a run; 6 within reach; 13 made scoops of their two hands joined; 25 with eager relish; 37 frolicsome embraces; 41 raked into a gridiron-pattern; 42 broken out; 48 matted locks; 60 acquired a tigerish smear; 61 his head more out of a long squalid bag of a night-cap than in it.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) Does the writer of this piece think that the stones of the street were designed to lame all people and animals that approached them?

(b) What does *its* in 'according to its size' refer to? What is the significance of 'according to its size' here?

(c) What is the significance of 'squeezed dry'? Does it mean 'squeezed while they were dry'? Or 'squeezed until they were dry'? If the latter, what were they wet with before they were squeezed dry?

(d) How did some of the onlookers at high windows participate in the fun?

(e) By what did the wine 'get taken up'?

(f) Why does the writer use the word 'miraculous' in referring to the imagined presence of a scavenger?

(g) In what way did the atmosphere of the street change when the wine was all finished?

(h) What was the normal atmosphere of the street?

(i) What does the writer of this piece foretell in his last paragraph?

(j) What is the wine the writer refers to in his last paragraph?

5. This piece gives a dramatic picture of a crowd scene, in which all the actors are poor people. Show how the writer of the piece brings out the people's poverty.

6. Show how the writer of this piece gives life to his picture by focusing on one detail after another; and how he makes his picture dramatic by concentrating on the moving rather than the static.

12

A WILD WEST DANCE

I MUST DESCRIBE A DANCE in the Wild West to you. It is really rather fun. Imagine a cold clear night, Orion swinging up over the pines, and the planet of the season blazing away like a bonfire: the mud frozen hard, and me with
5 overshoes and a flashlight, all warm in furs except where an icy zone encircles my silk stockings, making my lonely way through the woods to the parish hall. It is not more than half a mile away, all built of pine planks and cedar, and already very cosy with a roaring stove and red paper
10 streamers down the windows: two gasoline lamps buzzing from the ceiling and the orchestra tuning up. Mrs. Lister, the wife of our provincial M.P., runs the orchestra: she has thin ankles, and a short white skirt, a striped blazer coat, and carries on with immense verve till any hour of the
15 morning. Mrs. O., whose husband acquired from his wife a copper mine just above us on the hill, plays the piano; and a fair young man with a blue shirt and intellectual forehead plays the banjo and also owns the garage here. The man at the drum looks as if he ought to be a producer of
20 revues, but, of course, he isn't. I got there long after we were supposed to begin, but no dancers were there except a few of the young men in tartan shirts and the ladies whose business was to look after the supper. We slowly began to collect however, sitting ourselves in one long row. We all wear
25 home-made dresses and pink stockings and really look very

pretty especially when the colour we bring in from outside has stopped interfering with what we so carefully applied before starting. The young men don't come up unless they happen to know you, so that your social status can be gauged by the darkness of the coat or the amount of polish which has been given to the shoes that come up to dance with you. As soon as the music stops, you start walking round the room in procession till the orchestra takes pity and sets to again: when it remains obdurate, your young man takes you back to the row of chairs, deposits you among the other pink legs and retires. No sitting and flirting in corners: it would be difficult anyway in a bare, square room. The men smoke at one end: Mr. Hester alone, who is a schoolmaster's son ranching out here and has the social nerve which lets him do bold things, comes up to talk to us occasionally. A little special knot of intimates sit round the stove in the kitchen, where the pretty cooks are. Now and then however there is a wave of democracy: someone in the hall shouts out, 'All change partners': and one is suddenly abandoned, and seized by the nearest young man, and whirled round till the next order is shouted out. Sometimes one's partner is tapped on the back by someone who wants a dance, to whom one is immediately handed over. It is amusing to be switched suddenly from a drawing-room step into say the latest from a Liverpool suburb, or the backwoods here. When the supper waltz starts, everyone remains firmly seated on their chair till it comes to an end and the young men and women in charge begin handing down tables across the platform. I was taken up to sup with the orchestra and acted umpire whilst the drum and Mrs. O. played dice with the sugar lumps, and we handed our mugs to be filled with *café au lait* out of big kettles. It was very like the Wild West of the movies to look down through the smoke and the gasoline lamps to the young women with their shingled curls (a little more rebellious than on our

side) and the young men in the tartan shirts. At two we broke up, and packed ourselves back into furs and galoshes and snowshoes. Some kind person offered to see me home, but they all have to get up early to milk cows and things, so
 65 I resisted and came by myself through the snowy stillness of the pinewood—very lovely.

(About 715 words)

(From: FREYA STARK: *Beyond Euphrates*, John Murray, 1951.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

5 flashlight	34 obdurate	50 say	62 galoshes
11 tuning up	39 ranching	51 backwoods	
14 verve	43 wave	55 drum	

2. Here are ten words and phrases from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

6 zone	belt	34 sets to	sets off
10 buzzing	hissing	35 deposits	leaves
12 runs	conducts	40 nerve	nervousness
15 acquired	bought	46 whirled	twisted
20 revues	plays	62 broke up	broke down

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

2 Orion swinging up over the pines; 3 the planet of the season; 17 intellectual forehead; 26 the colour we bring in from outside has stopped interfering with what we so carefully applied before starting; 29 your social status can be gauged by the darkness of the coat or the amount of polish which has been given to the shoes that come up to dance with you; 41 knot of intimates; 53 handing down tables across the platform; 55 acted umpire; 60 on our side; 63 see me home.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) Why is the writer of this piece not warm all over while she is on her way to the dance?

(b) When the writer reaches the parish hall, what signs are there that there is going to be a dance there?

(c) Are the members of the band professional musicians? How do you know?

(d) If you were one of the men at the dance and had to explain the local rules of etiquette to a stranger (male) in your own words, what would you tell him?

(e) In what way did the schoolmaster's son depart from the rules followed by the others?

(f) Why did girls have to be ready to change their style of dancing suddenly in the middle of a dance?

(g) Why did the writer refuse to be seen home?

5. The writer of this piece sometimes uses the present and sometimes the past tense. Explain her reasons for changing from one tense to the other each time she does this.

6. This piece is part of a chatty letter. Give as many examples as you can of its informality of style (e.g. 'and me with over-shoes'.)

13

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

THE NAME OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE lives in the memory of the world by virtue of the lurid and heroic adventure of the Crimea. Had she died—as she nearly did—upon her return to England, her reputation would hardly have been different; her legend would have come down to us almost as we know it today—that gentle vision of female virtue which first took shape before the adoring eyes of the sick soldiers at Scutari. Yet, as a matter of fact, she lived for more than half a century after the Crimean War; and during the greater part of that long period all the energy and all the devotion of her extraordinary nature were working at their highest pitch. What she accomplished in those years of unknown labour could, indeed, hardly have been more glorious than her Crimean triumphs; but it was certainly more important. The true history was far stranger even than the myth. In Miss Nightingale's own eyes the adventure of the Crimea was a mere incident—scarcely more than a useful stepping-stone in her career. It was the fulcrum with which she hoped to move the world; but it was only the fulcrum. For more than a generation she was to sit in secret, working her lever: and her real life began at the very moment when, in the popular imagination, it had ended.

She arrived in England in a shattered state of health. The hardships and the ceaseless effort of the last two years had

undermined her nervous system; her heart was pronounced 25
to be affected; she suffered constantly from fainting-fits and
terrible attacks of utter physical prostration. The doctors
declared that one thing alone would save her—a complete
and prolonged rest. But that was also the one thing with 30
which she would have nothing to do. She had never been in
the habit of resting; why should she begin now? Now, when
her opportunity had come at last; now, when the iron was
hot, and it was time to strike? No; she had work to do;
and come what might, she would do it. The doctors pro- 35
tested in vain; in vain her family lamented and entreated, in
vain her friends pointed out to her the madness of such a
course. Madness? mad—possessed—perhaps she was. A
demoniac frenzy had seized upon her. As she lay upon her
sofa, gasping, she devoured blue-books, dictated letters, and, 40
in the intervals of her palpitations, cracked her febrile jokes.
For months at a stretch she never left her bed. For years she
was in daily expectation of death. But she would not rest. At
this rate, the doctors assured her, even if she did not die, she
would become an invalid for life. She could not help that;
there was the work to be done; and, as for rest, very likely 45
she might rest . . . when she had done it.

Wherever she went, in London or in the country, in the
hills of Derbyshire, or among the rhododendrons at Embley,
she was haunted by a ghost. It was the spectre of Scutari— 50
the hideous vision of the organization of a military hospital.
She would lay that phantom, or she would perish. The whole
system of the Army Medical Department, the education of
the Medical Officer, the regulations of hospital procedure
. . . rest? How could she rest while these things were as
they were, while, if the like necessity were to arise again, the 55
like results would follow? And, even in peace and at home,
what was the sanitary condition of the Army? The mortality
in the barracks was, she found, nearly double the mort-
ality in civil life. ‘You might as well take 1,100 men every

60 year out upon Salisbury Plain and shoot them,' she said.
(About 635 words)

(From: LYTTON STRACHEY: *Eminent Victorians*, 1918.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

16 myth	35 in vain	39 blue-books
18 career	35 lamented	40 palpitations
25 undermined	37 course	57 mortality
27 prostration	37 possessed	

2. Here are ten words and phrases from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

2 lurid	ghastly	35 entreated	requested
5 legend	story	39 devoured	consumed
12 accomplished	did	49 spectre	image
18 stepping-stone	step	50 hideous vision	ugly sight
23 shattered	broken	55 like	same

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

2 by virtue of; 7 took shape; 12 at their highest pitch; 21 working her lever; 25 her heart was pronounced to be affected; 29 the one thing with which she would have nothing to do; 32 when the iron was hot, and it was time to strike; 34 come what might; 37 A demoniac frenzy had seized upon her; 40 cracked her febrile jokes; 41 at a stretch; 42 at this rate; 44 She could not help that; 49 she was haunted by a ghost; 51 She would lay that phantom, or she would perish.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What part of Florence Nightingale's life is the writer of this

piece referring to when he refers to 'the true history', and what part is he referring to when he refers to 'the myth'?

(b) In this piece the words *fulcrum* and *lever* are used metaphorically. What does the writer really mean by 'the fulcrum'?

(c) What does he mean by Florence Nightingale's lever?

(d) What does he mean by moving the world with her fulcrum?

(e) In what ways did Florence Nightingale's view of the relative importance of different periods of her life differ from the public's view of this?

(f) Which of these two views does the writer of the piece support?

(g) In what way did Florence Nightingale refuse to follow her doctors' advice?

(h) Why did she refuse to follow this advice?

(i) What memories drove her to work so hard?

(j) What things did she want to get changed?

5. There is much that is rhetorical in this piece (e.g. the repetition of 'in vain' in line 35 first at the end of a clause, then at the beginning of the next clause, in an emphatic position, and then again in the same emphatic position in the clause after that). Give as many of these examples of rhetoric as you can.

6. Lurking behind the rhetoric of this piece, there is a tinge of irony. Point out examples of this.

14

THE STREET AS A THEATRE

AT THIS TIME, the street was my theatre, and I spent long periods, as I have said, leaning against the window. I feel now the coldness of the pane, and the feverish heat that was produced, by contrast, in the orbit round the eye. Now
5 and then amusing things happened. The onion-man was a joy long waited for. This worthy was a tall and bony Jersey Protestant with a raucous voice, who strode up our street several times a week, carrying a yoke across his shoulders, from the ends of which hung ropes of onions. He used to
10 shout, at abrupt intervals, in a tone which might wake the dead:

Here's your rope. . . .

To hang the Pope. . . .

And a penn'orth of cheese to choke him.

15 The cheese appeared to be legendary; he sold only onions. My Father did not eat onions, but he encouraged this terrible fellow, with his wild eyes and long strips of hair, because of his 'godly attitude towards the Papacy', and I used to watch him dart out of the front door, present his penny, and retire,
20 graciously waving back the proffered onion. On the other hand, my Father did not approve of a fat sailor, who was a constant passer-by. This man, who was probably crazed, used to walk very slowly up the centre of our street, vociferating with the voice of a bull,

This melancholy admonition was the entire business of his life. He did nothing at all but walk up and down the streets of Islington exhorting the inhabitants to watch and pray. I do not recollect that this sailor-man stopped to collect pennies, and my impression is that he was, after his fashion, a volunteer evangelist. 30

The tragedy of Mr. Punch was another, and a still greater delight. I was never allowed to go out into the street to mingle with the little crowd which gathered under the stage, and as I was extremely near-sighted, the impression I received was vague. But when, by happy chance, the show stopped opposite our door, I saw enough of that ancient drama to be thrilled with terror and delight. I was much affected by the internal troubles of the Punch family; I thought that with a little more tact on the part of Mrs. Punch and some restraint held over a temper, naturally violent, by Mr. Punch, a great deal of this sad misunderstanding might have been prevented. 40

The momentous close, when a figure of shapeless horror appears on the stage, and quells the hitherto undaunted Mr. Punch, was to me the bouquet of the entire performance. When Mr. Punch, losing his nerve, points to this shape and says in an awestruck, squeaking whisper, 'Who's that? Is it the butcher?' and the stern answer comes, 'No, Mr. Punch!' And then, 'Is it the baker?' 'No, Mr. Punch!' 'Who is it then?' (this in a squeak trembling with emotion and terror); and then the full, loud reply, booming like a judgment-bell, 'It is the Devil come to take you down to Hell,' and the form of Punch, with kicking legs, sunken in epilepsy on the floor—all this was solemn and exquisite to me beyond words. I was not amused—I was deeply moved 55

and exhilarated, 'purged', as the old phrase hath it, 'with pity and terror'.

(About 560 words)

(From: EDMUND GOSSE: *Father and Son*, Heinemann, 1907.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

4 orbit	27 admonition	47 bouquet
7 raucous	35 mingle	58 purged
15 legendary	36 near-sighted	
22 crazed	40 internal	

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another word or phrase opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by the word or phrase opposite it on the right?

6 worthy	good man	29 exhorting	begging
7 strode	marched	46 quells	crushes
17 strips	locks	49 awestruck	awful
19 dart	run	56 exquisite	beautiful
23 vociferating	crying	58 exhilarated	cheered

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

1 the street was my theatre; 10 at abrupt intervals; 31 after his fashion; 32 a volunteer evangelist; 45 The momentous close; 46 hitherto undaunted; 48 losing his nerve; 53 booming like a judgment-bell; 55 sunken in epilepsy; 57 beyond words.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What does the writer of this piece mean when he says that he feels *now* the coldness of the pane?

(b) How does the writer show that he disassociates himself from his father's attitude towards the onion-seller?

- (c) What was the 'ancient drama' that thrilled the writer?
- (d) What were the two reasons why he did not manage to see this 'ancient drama' properly?
- (e) What was there in the character of Mr. Punch that contributed to his family's internal troubles?
- (f) What was there in the character of Mrs. Punch that did the same?
- (g) Who was 'the figure of shapeless horror' that frightened Mr. Punch?
- (h) How do we know that Mr. Punch didn't really believe that the figure could be the butcher or the baker?
- (i) Why did he ask whether it was the butcher or the baker?
- (j) What indication have we that the effect of the drama on the writer of this piece was not the usual one?

15

THE IRISH DRAMATIST

IN WRITING *The Playboy of the Western World*, as in my other plays, I have used one or two words only that I have not heard among the country people of Ireland, or spoken in my own nursery before I could read the newspapers. A
5 certain number of the phrases I employ I have heard also from herds and fishermen along the coast from Kerry to Mayo, or from beggar-women and ballad-singers nearer Dublin; and I am glad to acknowledge how much I owe to the folk-imagination of these fine people. Anyone who has
10 lived in real intimacy with the Irish peasantry will know that the wildest sayings and ideas in this play are tame indeed, compared with the fancies one may hear in any little hillside cabin in Geesala, or Carraroe, or Dingle Bay. All art is a collaboration; and there is little doubt that in the happy
15 ages of literature, striking and beautiful phrases were as ready to the story-teller's or the playwright's hand, as the rich cloaks and dresses of his time. It is probable that when the Elizabethan dramatist took his ink-horn and sat down to his work he used many phrases that he had just heard,
20 as he sat at dinner, from his mother or his children. In Ireland, those of us who know the people have the same privilege. When I was writing *The Shadow of the Glen*, some years ago, I got more aid than any learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old Wicklow house
25 where I was staying, that let me hear what was being said by

the servant girls in the kitchen. This matter, I think, is of importance, for in countries where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality, which is the root of all poetry, in a comprehensive and natural form. In the modern literature of towns, however, richness is found only in sonnets, or prose poems, or in one or two elaborate books that are far away from the profound and common interests of life. One has, on one side, Mallarmé and Huysmans producing this literature; and on the other, Ibsen and Zola dealing with the reality of life in joyless and pallid words. On the stage one must have reality, and one must have joy; and that is why the intellectual modern drama has failed, and people have grown sick of the false joy of the musical comedy, that has been given them in place of the rich joy found only in what is superb and wild in reality. In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple, and such speeches cannot be written by anyone who works among people who have shut their lips on poetry. In Ireland, for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery, and magnificent, and tender; so that those of us who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the spring-time of the local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks.

(About 565 words)

(From: J. M. SYNGE: *The Playboy of the Western World*, Allen & Unwin, 1907.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

6 herds	29 copious	37 pallid
14 collaboration	32 sonnets	42 superb
15 striking	33 prose poems	
24 chink	34 profound	

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another word opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by the word opposite it on the right?

12 fancies	dreams
21 privilege	advantage
31 comprehensive	comprehensible
33 elaborate	complex
47 fiery	heated

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

10 in real intimacy with; 16 ready to the story-teller's or the playwright's hand; 40 grown sick of; 43 fully flavoured; 45 shut their lips on.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What type of words does the author of *The Playboy of the Western World* claim to have used, for the most part, in this play?

(b) What comparison does he draw between the imaginative aspects of his play and the imagination of the Irish peasantry?

(c) Between whom is all art a 'collaboration'?

(d) How does the writer of this piece compare his advantages as a playwright with those of Elizabethan dramatists?

(e) What effect did the 'chink in the floor' have on *The Shadow of the Glen*?

(f) Under what circumstances can rich language also be natural, according to the writer of this piece?

(g) What sort of literature does the writer of this piece say that Mallarmé and Huysmans were producing?

(h) What three elements does the writer of this piece consider essential if drama is really to satisfy?

(i) Why has the dramatist who lives in the Irish countryside advantages over one who lives in a town elsewhere?

(j) What types of people does the writer of this piece suggest have 'shut their lips on poetry'?

5. What does the writer of this piece think of (i) the ballads of Irish ballad-singers? (ii) Elizabethan drama? (iii) the works of Mallarmé and Huysmans? (iv) the works of Ibsen and Zola? and (v) musical comedies?

6. What does the writer of this piece mean by 'the spring-time of the local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks' in his last sentence? How does it fit in with the main argument of the piece?

7. In this piece, the writer argues in favour of a combination of richness, joy and realism in literature. How does his own use of language in this piece provide examples of these qualities?



16

THE LAST GLEEMAN

MICHAEL MORAN WAS BORN about 1794 off Black Pitts, in the Liberties of Dublin, in Faddle Alley. A fortnight after birth he went stone blind from illness, and became thereby a blessing to his parents, who were soon able to send
5 him to rhyme and beg at street corners and at the bridges over the Liffey. They may well have wished that their quiver were full of such as he, for, free from the interruption of sight, his mind turned every movement of the day and every change of public passion into rhyme or quaint saying.
10 By the time he had grown to manhood he was the admitted rector of all the ballad-mongers of the Liberties, of Madden, the weaver, Kearney, the blind fiddler from Wicklow, Martin from Meath, M'Bride from Heaven knows where, and that M'Grane, who in after days, when the true Moran
15 was no more, strutted in borrowed plumes, or rather in borrowed rags, and gave out that there had never been any Moran but himself, and many another. Nor despite his blindness did he find any difficulty in getting a wife, but rather was able to pick and choose, for he was just that mixture
20 of ragamuffin and of genius which is dear to the heart of woman, who, however conventional in herself, loves the unexpected, the crooked, the bewildering. Nor did he lack, despite his rags, many excellent things, for it is remembered that he ever loved caper sauce, and upon one occasion when
25 his wife had forgotten it, he flung a leg of mutton at her

head. He was not, certainly, much to look at, with his coarse frieze coat with its cape and scalloped edge, his old corduroy trousers and great brogues, and his stout stick made fast to his wrist by a thong of leather: and he would have been a woeful shock to the gleeman MacCoinglinne, could that friend of kings have beheld him in prophetic vision from the pillar stone at Cork. And yet though the short cloak and the leather wallet were no more, he was a true gleeman, being alike poet, jester, and newsman of the people. In the morning when he had finished his breakfast, his wife or some neighbour would read the newspaper to him, and read on and on until he interrupted with, 'That'll do—I have me meditations'; and from these meditations would come the day's store of jest and rhyme. He had the whole Middle Ages under his frieze coat.

He had not, however, MacCoinglinne's hatred of the Church and clergy, for when the fruit of his meditations did not ripen well, or when the crowd called for something more solid, he would recite or sing a metrical tale or ballad of saint or martyr or some Biblical adventure. He would stand at a street corner, and when a crowd had gathered would begin in some such fashion as follows (I copy the record of one who knew him): 'Gather round me, boys, gather round me. Boys, am I standin' in puddle? Am I standin' in wet?' Thereon several boys would cry, 'Ah, no! yez not! yer in a nice dry place. Go on with "Saint Mary"; go on with "Moses"'—each calling for his favourite tale. Then Moran, with a wriggle of his body and a clutch at his rags, would burst out with, 'All me buzzim friends are turned back-biters'; and after a final warning to the boys, 'If yez don't drop your coddin' and diversion I'll lave some of yez a case,' begin his recitation, or perhaps still delay, to ask, 'Is there a crowd round me now? Any blaguard heretic around me?' Or he would, it may be, start by singing:

Gather round me, boys, will yez
 Gather round me?
 And hear what I have to say
 Before ould Sally brings me
 My bread and jug of tay.

(About 650 words)

(From: W. B. YEATS: *Mythologies*, Macmillan, 1959.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

3	stone	28	brogues	50	thereon
11	rector	30	woeful	53	clutch
26	coarse	30	gleeman		
27	scalloped	39	jest		

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by the one opposite it on the right?

9	quaint	strange
21	conventional	respectable
28	great	big
38	meditations	thoughts
53	wriggle	twist

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

6 wished that their quiver were full of; 7 free from the interruption of sight; 8 movement of the day; 13 Heaven knows where; 14 in after days; 15 strutted in borrowed plumes; 16 gave out; 31 beheld him in prophetic vision; 33 were no more; 42 the fruit of his meditations did not ripen well; 44 metrical tale; 54 burst out.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- (a) Why were Moran's parents glad that he had become blind?
 - (b) What effect did his blindness have on him?
 - (c) What exactly does the writer of this piece mean when he says, 'his mind turned every movement of the day and every change of public passion into rhyme or quaint saying'?
 - (d) What did Madden, Kearney, Martin, M'Bride and M'Grane have in common?
 - (e) In what way did M'Grane try to deceive people?
 - (f) How was Moran helped to get a wife by the nature of women's psychology?
 - (g) What evidence does the writer of this piece give to support his statement that Moran did not lack many excellent things?
 - (h) How do you think Moran obtained money to pay for these things?
 - (i) Why would Moran have been 'a woeful shock' to MacCoinglinne?
 - (j) How exactly did Moran operate as a 'newsman of the people'?
 - (k) What was the fruit of Moran's meditations?
 - (l) What was it that Moran's public considered 'more solid'? What did they consider less solid?
 - (m) Why did Moran ask the boys whether he was standing in a puddle?
 - (n) How do we know that the boys had heard these tales before?
 - (o) What did Moran mean by 'any blaguard heretic'? What do you think his own religion was? Why do you think this?
5. What evidence is there in this piece that Moran was both a genius, in his own way, and a showman?
6. Show how Moran had 'the whole Middle Ages under his frieze coat'.
7. The writer of this piece uses archaic expressions (e.g. *thereon*) to heighten the effect of what he has to say. Show how he does this.
8. How if at all, does this piece illustrate what the writer of Piece 15 ('The Irish Dramatist') says about Irish writing?

17

UNEXPECTED SUNSET

THE ROAD WAS HEAVY WITH MUD. It was labour to move along it. The old, wide way, forsaken and grown over with grass, used not to be so bad. The farm traffic from Coney Grey must have cut it up. The young man crossed carefully
5 again to the strip of grass on the other side.

It was a dreary, out-of-doors track, saved only by low fragments of fence and occasional bushes from the desolation of the large spaces of arable and of grassland on either side, where only the unopposed wind and the great clouds
10 mattered, where even the little grasses bent to one another indifferent of any traveller. The abandoned road used to seem clean and firm. Cyril Mer sham stopped to look round and to bring back old winters to the scene, over the ribbed red lane and the purple wood. The surface of the field seemed
15 suddenly to lift and break. Something had startled the peewits, and the fallow flickered over with pink gleams of birds white-breasting the sunset. Then the plovers turned, and were gone in the dusk behind.

Darkness was issuing out of the earth, and clinging to the
20 trunks of the elms which rose like weird statues, lessening down the wayside. Mer sham laboured forwards, the earth sucking and smacking at his feet. In front the Coney Grey farm was piled in shadow on the road. He came near to it, and saw the turnips heaped in a fabulous heap up the side
25 of the barn, a buttress that rose almost to the eaves, and stretched out towards the cart-ruts in the road. Also, the

pale breasts of the turnips got the sunset, and they were innumerable orange glimmers piled in the dusk. The two labourers who were pulping at the foot of the mound stood shadow-like to watch as he passed, breathing the sharp 30 scent of turnips.

It was all very wonderful and glamorous here, in the old places that had seemed so ordinary. Three-quarters of the scarlet sun was settling among the branches of the elm in front, right ahead where he would come soon. But when he 35 arrived at the brow where the hill swooped downwards, where the broad road ended suddenly, the sun had vanished from the space before him, and the evening star was white where the night urged up against the retreating, rose-coloured billow of day. Mersham passed through the stile 40 and sat upon the remnants of the thorn tree on the brink of the valley. All the wide space before him was full of a mist of rose, nearly to his feet. The large ponds were hidden, the farms, the fields, the far-off coal-mine, under the rosy outpouring of twilight. Between him and the spaces of Leicester- 45 shire and the hills of Derbyshire, between him and all the South Country which he had fled, was the splendid rose-red strand of sunset, and the white star keeping guard.

(About 500 words)

(From: D. H. LAWRENCE: *A Modern Lover*, 1934.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

2	forsaken	25	eaves	36	brow
7	desolation	26	cart-ruts	48	strand
8	arable	29	pulping		
15	startled	32	glamorous		

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

13	ribbed	rough	28	glimmers	flashes
18	dusk	dark	34	settling	setting
20	weird	queer	36	swooped	dipped
24	fabulous	miraculous	40	stile	gate
25	buttress	wall	41	brink	edge

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

1 it was labour to move along it; 6 a dreary, out-of-doors track; 11 indifferent of; 13 to bring back old winters to the scene; 16 the fallow flickered over with pink gleams of birds white-breasting the sunset; 20 lessening down the wayside; 23 piled in shadow; 27 got the sunset; 39 the night urged up against the retreating, rose-coloured billow of day; 44 the rosy outpouring of twilight.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) Compare the road as Mersham had known it previously with the road as it was at the time described in this piece.

(b) What had caused these changes in the road?

(c) What effects did the nature of the road have on Mersham?

(d) What was it that gave the impression of the surface of the field suddenly lifting and breaking?

(e) What was the relationship between the peewits and the plovers mentioned in this piece?

(f) How do the turnips contribute to the atmosphere of this piece?

(g) How do the labourers contribute to the atmosphere?

(h) Give examples of the ways in which the writer of this piece endows natural objects with a personality.

(i) Does the writer interpret the attitude of the sunset and that of the evening star as friendly or as hostile towards Mersham?

(j) How do the sunset and the evening star show this friendliness or hostility?

5. The writer of this piece contrasts (a) bleak desolation and rosy splendour; (b) vast open spaces and things towering up above one; and (c) light and shadow. Trace the steps by which each of these contrasts is developed, and show how (a), (b) and (c) are interwoven to produce the atmosphere of the piece.

18

A LITERARY NOVICE

AT LENGTH JOHNSON, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of *Irene* in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.

Never since literature became a calling in England had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that he could expect was a pension or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state. It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of letters, indeed, Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author

whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson, whose *Seasons* were in every library, such an author as Fielding, whose *Pasquin* had had a greater run than any drama since *The Beggar's Opera*, was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, 'You had better get a porter's knot, and carry trunks.' Nor was the advice bad; for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed, and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.

Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connection from which he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. 'Harry Hervey,' said the old philosopher many years later, 'was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him.' At Hervey's table Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in general he dined, and thought that he dined well, on sixpenny worth of meat, and a pennyworth of bread, at an alehouse near Drury Lane.

(About 525 words)

(From: LORD MACAULAY: *Literary Essays: Samuel Johnson*, 1856.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

4 in manuscript	14 secretary of state	23 handsome
9 eminent	18 dreary	34 humiliations
9 munificently	20 flourish	34 privations
11 sinecure place	20 patronage	38 uncouth
12 aptitude	22 acquired	42 elapsed

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

18 vocation	job	35 novice	newcomer
25 solitary	rare	48 vicious	fierce
30 pawning	selling		

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

2 a literary adventurer; 8 took up his residence; 24 on a footing of equality with; 26 whose reputation was established; 29 had a greater run; 31 the means of; 43 form any literary connection; 46 relieved his wants; 47 time of trial; 51 by contrast.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) How did the way in which an outstanding writer could earn a good living in the period before Johnson differ from the way in which one could earn a good living in the period after him?

(b) Was it possible to become rich by writing in Johnson's time? How does the writer of this piece convey the answer to this question to us?

(c) Does the first sentence of the last paragraph of this piece 'Some time . . . passing over him' imply that during this period Johnson's literary work did not help him to live at all?

(d) Does it imply that it regularly provided him with just enough food to live on during this period?

(e) By contrast with *what* were Johnson's feasts at Hervey's table made more agreeable?

5. This piece is an example of plain but vivid narrative, which gains much from the clear way in which it is built up (e.g. the first sentence in paragraph 2 states that Johnson began his literary career at an unfortunate time. The second and fourth sentences justify this statement: the second sentence shows how the preceding period was better, and the fourth sentence how the period after Johnson was also better. The third sentence illustrates and expands what was said in the second sentence. And so on). Trace this structure carefully.

19

SUBLIME IMPUDENCE

IN AN ALCOVE off the entrance . . . he could see a man lolling in an old armchair, smoking a cigarette through a holder. . . . He wore a dark suit with little lines; his legs were crossed, and Soames noted that one foot in a worn brown shoe, treed and polished against age to the point of pathos, was slowly moving in a circle. . . . 5

Soames now saw the face. Its eyebrows were lifted in a V reversed, its eyelids nearly covered its eyes. Together with the figure, it gave an impression of really remarkable languor. Thin to a degree, oval and pale, it seemed all shadow and slightly aquiline feature. The foot had become still, the whole affair still. Soames had the curious feeling of being in the presence of something arrogantly dead. Without time for thought, he began: 10

'Mr. Stainford, I think? Don't disturb yourself. My name is Forsyte. You called at my sister's in Green Street yesterday afternoon.' 15

A slight contraction of the lines round that small mouth was followed by the words:

'Will you sit down?' 20

The eyes had opened now, and must once have been beautiful. They narrowed again, so that Soames could not help feeling that their owner had outlived everything except himself. He swallowed a qualm and resumed:

'I just wanted to ask you a question. During your call, did 25

you by any chance happen to notice a Louis Quinze snuff-box on the table? It's—er—disappeared, and we want to fix the time of its loss.'

As a ghost might have smiled, so did the man in the chair; his eyes disappeared still further.

'Afraid not.'

With the thought, 'He's got it!' Soames went on:

'I'm sorry—the thing had virtue as an heirloom. It has obviously been stolen. I wanted to narrow down the issue. If you'd noticed it, we could have fixed the exact hour—on the little table just where you were sitting—blue enamel.'

The thin shoulders wriggled slightly, as though resenting this attempt to place responsibility on them.

'Sorry I can't help you; I noticed nothing but some rather good marqueterie.'

'Coolest card¹ I ever saw,' thought Soames. 'Wonder if it's in his pocket.'

'The thing's unique,' he said slowly. 'The police won't have much difficulty. Well, thanks very much. I apologise for troubling you. . . . Good-morning.'

'Good-morning.'

From the door Soames took a stealthy glance. The figure was perfectly motionless, the legs still crossed. . . . The fellow had it, he was sure.

He went out and down to the Green Park with a most peculiar feeling. Sneak thief! A gentleman to come to that! . . . The whitened seams of the excellent suit, the traversing creases in the once admirable shoes, the faded tie exactly tied, were evidences of form preserved, day by day, from hand to mouth. They afflicted Soames. That languid figure! What did a chap do when he had no money and couldn't exert himself to save his life? Incapable of shame—that was clear! He must talk to Winifred again. And, turning on his heel, Soames walked back towards Green Street. Debouching from the Park, he saw on the

opposite side of Piccadilly the languid figure. It, too, was moving in the direction of Green Street. Phew! He crossed over and followed. . . .

Suddenly hastening, he said, rather breathlessly, on his sister's very doorstep:

'Ah! Mr. Stainford! Come to return the snuffbox?'

With a sigh, and a slight stiffening of his cane on the pavement, the figure turned. Soames felt a sudden compunction—as of one who has jumped out at a child in the dark. The face, unmoved, with eyebrows still raised and lids still lowered, was greenishly pale, like that of a man whose heart is affected; a faint smile struggled on the lips. There was fully a half a minute's silence, then the pale lips spoke.

'Depends. How much?'

What little breath was in Soames' body left him. The impudence! And again the lips moved.

'You can have it for ten pounds.'

'I can have it for nothing,' said Soames, 'by asking a policeman to step here.'

The smile returned. 'You won't do that.'

'Why not?'

'Not done.'

'Not done!' repeated Soames. 'Why on earth not? Most barefaced thing I ever knew.'

'Ten pounds,' said the lips. 'I want them badly.'

Soames stood and stared. The thing was so sublime; the fellow as easy as if asking for a match; not a flicker on a face which looked as if it might pass into death at any moment. Great art! He perceived that it was not the slightest use to indulge in moral utterance. The choice was between giving him the ten pounds or calling a policeman. He looked up and down the street.

'No—there isn't one in sight. I have the box here—ten pounds.'

Soames began to stammer. The fellow was exercising on

him a sort of fascination. And suddenly the whole thing tickled him. It was rich!²

'Well!' he said, taking out two five-pound notes. 'For brass—!'³

100 A thin hand removed a slight protuberance from a side pocket.

'Thanks very much. Here it is! Good-morning!'

105 The fellow was moving away. He moved with the same incomparable languor; he didn't look back. Soames stood with the snuffbox in his hand, staring after him.

'Well!' he said aloud, 'that's a specimen they can't produce now,' and he rang Winifred's bell.

(About 880 words)

(From: JOHN GALSWORTHY: *A Modern Comedy: Swan Song*, 1929.)

¹ A *cool card* is a person who remains calm in situations which would excite or alarm most people.

² very humorous.

³ *brass* is here a slang word meaning impudence or cheek.

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

2	lolling	43	unique	86	sublime
11	aquiline	47	stealthy	87	easy
18	contraction	52	whitened seams	87	flicker
28	fix	53	traversing creases	95	stammer
33	virtue	60	debouching	97	tickled
33	heirloom	72	affected	100	protuberance
37	wriggled	84	barefaced		

2. Here are five words and phrases from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

1	an alcove	a corner
10	languor	laziness
13	arrogantly	proudly
55	afflicted	affected
68	compunction	repentance

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

5 treed and polished against age to the point of pathos; 7 lifted in a V reversed; 10 thin to a degree; 12 the whole affair still; 24 swallowed a qualm; 34 to narrow down the issue; 51 Sneak thief; 51 A gentleman to come to that; 54 evidences of form preserved; 57 exert himself; 82 Not done; 89 Great art; 90 indulge in moral utterance; 95 exercising on him a sort of fascination; 106 that's a specimen they can't produce now.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) Why did Soames swallow a qualm before making his second utterance in this piece?

(b) Why did he hesitate before saying the word *disappeared*?

(c) Was Soames's real purpose in questioning Mr. Stainford to fix the time of the loss of the snuffbox? If not, what was his real purpose?

(d) What was Soames's real reason for saying, 'The thing's unique. The police won't have much difficulty'?

(e) What did Soames deduce from the contrast between the good quality of Mr. Stainford's suit and shoes and the care with which his tie was tied, on one hand, and the whitened seams, traversing creases and fading, on the other?

(f) What do you think Soames's answer would have been to his question, 'What did a chap do when he had no money and couldn't exert himself to save his life?'?

(g) Why did Soames feel a sudden compunction?

(h) Why was Soames's breath taken away by what Mr. Stainford said?

(i) Why did the whole thing suddenly tickle Soames?

(j) Soames stops short after saying 'Well! For brass——!' How could he have completed his sentence?

5. Soames's attitude towards Mr. Stainford was a mixture of annoyance, pity and admiration. What points about Mr. Stainford's appearance and behaviour arouse (a) his distaste and annoyance; (b) his pity; and (c) his admiration.

6. How does the writer of this piece use the description of clothing to arouse emotion in the reader?

7. Summarise in not more than 80 words the moral issues facing Soames in this piece.

20

ATTACK AT ALL COSTS!

THE CAPTAIN DREW IN HIS BREATH sharply at the sight. There were about forty men in the water, concentrated in a small space: if he went ahead with the attack he must, for certain, kill them all. He knew well enough, as did every-
one on board, the effect of depth-charges exploding under-
water—the splitting crash which made the sea jump and
boil and spout skywards, the aftermath of torn seaweed and
dead fish which always littered the surface after the ex-
plosion. Now there were men instead of fish and seaweed,
men swimming towards him in confidence and hope. . . .
And yet the U-boat was there, one of the pack which had
been harassing and bleeding them for days on end, the des-
troying menace which *must* have priority, because of what
it might do to other ships and other convoys in the future.
As the seconds sped by, and the range closed, he fought
against his doubts, and against the softening instinct of
mercy: the book said: 'Attack at all costs', and this was a
page out of the book, and the men swimming in the water
did not matter at all, when it was a question of bringing one
of the killers to account.

All right, then, thought Ericson, with a new unlooked-for
access of brutality to help him: all right, we'll go for the
U-boat. With no more hesitation he gave the order: 'Attack-
ing—stand by!' to the depth-charge positions aft; and hav-
ing made this sickening choice he swept in to the attack

with a deadened mind, intent only on one kind of kill, pretending there was no other.

Many of the men in the water waved wildly as they saw what was happening: some of them screamed, some threw themselves out of the ship's path and thrashed furiously in the hope of reaching safety: others, slower-witted or nearer to exhaustion, still thought that *Compass Rose* was speeding to their rescue, and continued to wave and smile almost to their last moment. . . . The ship came in like an avenging angel, cleaving the very centre of the knots of swimmers: the amazement and horror on their faces was reflected aboard *Compass Rose*, where many of the crew, particularly among the depth-charge parties aft, could not believe what they were being called upon to do. Only two men did not share this horror: Ericson, who had shut and battened down his mind except to a single thought—the U-boat they must kill: and Ferraby, whose privilege it was to drop the depth-charges. 'Serve you bloody well right!' thought Ferraby as *Compass Rose* swept in among the swimmers, catching some of them in her screw, while the firing-bell sounded and the charges rolled over the stern or were rocketed outwards from the throwers: 'Serve you right—you nearly killed us last night, making us stop next door to that fire¹—now it's our turn.'

There was a deadly pause, while for a few moments the men aboard *Compass Rose* and the men left behind in her wake stared at each other, in pity and fear and a kind of basic disbelief; and then with a huge hammer-crack the depth-charges exploded.

Mercifully the details were hidden in the flurry and roar of the explosion; and the men must all have died instantly, shocked out of life by the tremendous pressure of the sea thrown up upon their bodies. But one freak item of the horror impressed itself on the memory. As the tormented water leapt upwards in a solid grey cloud, the single figure

of a man was tossed high on the very plume of the fountain, a puppet figure of whirling arms and legs seeming to make, in death, wild gestures of anger and reproach. It appeared to hang a long time in the air, cursing them all, before falling back into the boiling sea.

(About 660 words)

(From: NICHOLAS MONSARRAT: *The Cruel Sea*, Cassell, 1951.)

¹ The previous night *Compass Rose* had stopped near a burning ship to save some of its crew, and during this time, *Compass Rose* had been an easy target for enemy submarines; but she had not, in fact, been attacked.

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

7 spout	24 aft	52 wake
7 aftermath	26 intent	53 basic
12 harassing	30 thrashed	55 flurry
12 bleeding	31 slower-witted	58 freak item
13 menace	35 cleaving	61 plume
15 sped by	40 battened down	65 boiling
21 unlooked-for	46 rocketed	

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by the one opposite it on the right?

8 littered	covered	32 exhaustion	tiredness
10 confidence	faith	34 avenging	vengeful
13 priority	preference	35 knots	groups
22 access	increase	53 hammer-crack	bang
26 deadened	calm	59 tormented	turbulent

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

3 went ahead with; 15 the range closed; 17 at all costs; 17 this was a page out of the book; 19 bringing one of the killers to account;

22 go for; 24 stand by; 33 to their last moment; 39 called upon;
43 Serve you right; 62 a puppet figure of whirling arms and legs.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What was the Captain's name, and what was the name of his ship?

(b) What were the men swimming towards the ship confident about?

(c) What sort of priority did the U-boat have to have?

(d) What sort of 'book' is referred to in the first paragraph of this piece?

(e) What decision did the Captain have to make?

(f) What did most of the crew think of his decision? Why did Ferraby not agree with them?

(g) What action did the Captain take against the U-boat?

(h) How did the depth-charges get into the sea?

(i) Why was there a 'deadly pause'?

(j) Which men 'died instantly'?

5. In this piece, the writer creates an atmosphere of horror which is heightened by the conflict between duty and mercy, hope and fear. Show how he uses language to achieve his effects.

21

THE ORCHESTRA

THAT SUNDAY, from six o'clock in the evening, it was a Viennese orchestra that played. The season was late for an outdoor concert; already leaves were drifting on to the grass stage—here and there one turned over, crepitating as though in the act of dying, and during the music some more fell.

The open-air theatre, shelving below the level of the surrounding lawns, was walled by thickets and a few high trees; along the top ran a wattle fence with gates. Now the two gates stood open. The rows of chairs down the slope, facing the orchestra, still only filled up slowly. From here, from where it was being played at the base of this muffled hollow, the music could not travel far through the park—but hints of it that did escape were disturbing: from the mound, from the rose gardens, from the walks round the lakes people were being slowly drawn to the theatre by the sensation that they were missing something. Many of them paused in the gateways doubtfully—all they had left behind was in sunshine, while this hollow which was the source of music was found to be also the source of dusk. War had made them idolize day and summer; night and autumn were enemies. And, at the start of the concert, this tarnished bosky theatre, in which no plays had been acted for some time, held a feeling of sequestration, of emptiness the music had not had time to fill. It was not completely in shadow—here and there blades of sunset crossed it, firing branches through

which they travelled, and lay along ranks of chairs and faces and hands. Gnats quivered, cigarette smoke dissolved. But the light was so low, so theatrical and so yellow that it was evident it would soon be gone. The incoming tide was evening. Glass-clear darkness, in which each leaf was defined, already formed in the thicket behind the orchestra and was the other element of the stage.

The Sunday had been brilliant, without a stain of cloud. Now, the burning turquoise sky of the afternoon began to gain in transparency as it lost colour: from above the trees round the theatre there stole away not only colour but time. Music—the waltzes, the marches, the gay overtures—now began to command this hourless place. The people lost their look of uncertainty. The heroic marches made them lift up their heads; recollections of opera moulded their faces into unconscious smiles, and during the waltzes women's eyes glittered with delicious tears about nothing. First note by note, drop by drop, then steadily, the music entered senses, nerves and fancies that had been parched. What first was a mirage strengthened into a universe for the shabby Londoners and the exiled foreigners sitting in this worn glade in the middle of Regent's Park.

(About 480 words)

(From: ELIZABETH BOWEN: *The Heat of the Day*, Jonathan Cape, 1949.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

4	crepitating	21	tarnished	40	moulded
6	shelving	21	bosky	44	parched
13	mound	25	firing		
20	idolize	38	hourless		

2. Here are ten words and phrases from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

7 thickets	hedges	28 theatrical	dramatic
11 muffled	quiet	30 defined	visible
13 disturbing	irritating	33 stain	patch
23 sequestration	privacy	42 glittered	shone
27 quivered	trembled	45 a mirage	an illusion

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

5 in the act of; 8 a wattle fence; 25 blades of sunset; 29 The incoming tide was evening; 45 strengthened into a universe.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What evidence is there in this piece of the time of the concert?

(b) What evidence is there of the season of the year?

(c) What evidence is there of the epoch during which the concert took place?

(d) Draw (i) a rough imaginary plan of the park, putting in the various features mentioned in the piece; and (ii) a cross-section of the open-air theatre.

(e) What was the first reaction to the music of the people walking in the park?

(f) Why did they hesitate before going into the theatre?

(g) When did their doubts finally vanish?

(h) What two reasons does the writer suggest for the success of the concert with its audience?

(i) How does the writer's use of the words *mirage* and *universe* as contrasts in the last sentence summarise the whole piece?

(j) What is the force of the words *shabby* and *exiled* in the last sentence? Does the writer use them in a critical sense?

5. Imagine that you are a woman sitting in the rose gardens, and describe your sensations from the time you first hear the orchestra until you are sitting in the theatre listening to one of the later pieces in the concert.

6. The writer of this piece very skilfully uses visual effects, particularly effects of light and darkness, to create an atmosphere. Give examples of this and show how these effects are made sometimes to conflict with the lure of the music and sometimes to reinforce it, until this lure finally triumphs.

7. The writer is very successful in giving us insights into the feelings of the people she describes. Give examples.



IF JOAN HAD BEEN MALICIOUS, selfish, cowardly or stupid, she would have been one of the most odious persons known to history instead of one of the most attractive. If she had been old enough to know the effect she was producing on the men whom she humiliated by being right when they were wrong, and had learned to flatter and manage them, she might have lived as long as Queen Elizabeth. But she was too young and rustical and inexperienced to have any such arts. When she was thwarted by men whom she thought fools, she made no secret of her opinion of them or her impatience with their folly; and she was naïve enough to expect them to be obliged to her for setting them right and keeping them out of mischief. Now it is always hard for superior wits to understand the fury roused by their exposures of the stupidities of comparative dullards. Even Socrates, for all his age and experience, did not defend himself at his trial like a man who understood the long accumulated fury that had burst on him, and was clamoring for his death. His accuser, if born 2,300 years later, might have been picked out of any first-class carriage on a suburban railway during the evening or morning rush from or to the City; for he had really nothing to say except that he and his like could not endure being shown up as idiots every time Socrates opened his mouth. Socrates, unconscious of this, was paralyzed by his sense that somehow he was

missing the point of the attack. He petered out after he had established the fact that he was an old soldier and a man of honorable life, and that his accuser was a silly snob. He had no suspicion of the extent to which his mental superiority had roused fear and hatred against him in the hearts of men towards whom he was conscious of nothing but good will and good service.

If Socrates was as innocent as this at the age of seventy, it may be imagined how innocent Joan was at the age of seventeen. Now Socrates was a man of argument, operating slowly and peacefully on men's minds, whereas Joan was a woman of action, operating with impetuous violence on their bodies. That, no doubt, is why the contemporaries of Socrates endured him so long, and why Joan was destroyed before she was fully grown. But both of them combined terrifying ability with a frankness, personal modesty, and benevolence which made the furious dislike to which they fell victims absolutely unreasonable, and therefore inapprehensible by themselves. Napoleon, also possessed of terrifying ability, but neither frank nor disinterested, had no illusions as to the nature of his popularity. When he was asked how the world would take his death, he said it would give a gasp of relief. But it is not so easy for mental giants who neither hate nor intend to injure their fellows to realize that nevertheless their fellows hate mental giants and would like to destroy them, not only enviously because the juxtaposition of a superior wounds their vanity, but quite humbly and honestly because it frightens them. Fear will drive men to any extreme; and the fear inspired by a superior being is a mystery which cannot be reasoned away. Being immeasurable it is unbearable when there is no presumption or guarantee of its benevolence and moral responsibility: in other words, when it has no official status. The legal and conventional superiority of Herod and Pilate, and of Annas and Caiaphas, inspires fear; but the fear, being a reasonable

fear of measurable and avoidable consequences which seem salutary and protective, is bearable; whilst the strange superiority of Christ and the fear it inspires elicit a shriek of Crucify Him from all who cannot divine its benevolence. Socrates has to drink the hemlock, Christ to hang on the cross, and Joan to burn at the stake, whilst Napoleon, though he ends in St. Helena, at least dies in his bed there; and many terrifying but quite comprehensible official scoundrels die natural deaths in all the glory of the kingdoms of this world, proving that it is far more dangerous to be a saint than to be a conqueror. Those who have been both, like Mahomet and Joan, have found that it is the conqueror who must save the saint, and that defeat and capture mean martyrdom. Joan was burnt without a hand lifted on her own side to save her. The comrades she had led to victory and the enemies she had disgraced and defeated, the French king she had crowned and the English king whose crown she had kicked into the Loire, were equally glad to be rid of her.

(About 800 words)

(From: G. B. SHAW: Preface to *St. Joan*, Constable & Co. Ltd., 1927.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

1 malicious	15 exposures	47 take
5 humiliated	16 for	54 inspired
6 manage	18 clamoring	59 conventional
8 rustical	23 endure	62 salutary
9 arts	25 paralyzed	63 elicit
9 thwarted	25 sense	65 hemlock
11 naïve	27 established	66 stake
12 obliged	28 snob	
14 wits	37 impetuous	

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by the one opposite it on the right?

2	odious	hated
42	benevolence	kindness
45	disinterested	uninterested
56	presumption	assumption
64	divine	guess

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

12 setting them right; 15 comparative dullards; 17 long accumulated fury; 23 shown up as idiots; 26 missing the point of; 26 petered out; 35 a man of argument; 43 fell victims; 43 inapprehensible by themselves; 44 possessed of; 48 give a gasp of relief; 50 mental giants; 51 the juxtaposition of a superior wounds their vanity; 55 reasoned away; 57 moral responsibility; 58 official status; 68 quite comprehensible official scoundrels; 69 die natural deaths; 74 without a hand lifted on her own side; 78 to be rid of.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- (a) In what ways did Joan fail to understand men's psychology?
- (b) How did her failure to understand this psychology lead to her premature death? How could she have avoided this death, according to the writer of this piece?
- (c) Why did people demand Socrates' death?
- (d) Why had they not demanded it before?
- (e) Why did Socrates fail to understand what his enemies really disliked about him?
- (f) Why did Napoleon really understand what people thought of him?
- (g) Why did Joan not live as long as Socrates did?
- (h) Why do ordinary people fear mental giants, even if the latter love them?
- (i) Why is it more dangerous to be an unofficial saint than an official scoundrel, according to the writer of this piece?

(j) Why were the people whom Joan had helped as glad to be rid of her as those she had disgraced and defeated?

5. The writer of this piece discusses Socrates, Napoleon, Christ and Mahomet as well as Joan. Show briefly, in your own words, what similarities and what differences he points out between Joan and each of these four persons, and how he uses each of them to help his main argument.

6. The moral of this piece is that good intentions are not by themselves enough to save a 'mental giant' from being misunderstood and persecuted; and that, indeed, their opposites may do this much more effectively. Show, in your own words, how the writer develops and illustrates this moral.

7. The writer of this piece takes several digs at the stupidity of the ordinary man of all countries and all eras. Point these out. What type of Englishman of his own day does he have a particular dig at, and how does he do this?

23

EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

ON REACHING THE AGE OF EIGHTY it is reasonable to suppose that the bulk of one's work is done, and that what remains to do will be of less importance. The serious part of my life ever since boyhood has been devoted to two different
5 objects which for a long time remained separate and have only in recent years united into a single whole. I wanted, on the one hand, to find out whether anything could be known; and, on the other hand, to do whatever might be possible towards creating a happier world. Up to the age of thirty-
10 eight I gave most of my energies to the first of these tasks. I was troubled by scepticism and unwillingly forced to the conclusion that most of what passes for knowledge is open to reasonable doubt. I wanted certainty in the kind of way in which people want religious faith. I thought that certainty
15 is more likely to be found in mathematics than elsewhere. But I discovered that many mathematical demonstrations, which my teachers expected me to accept, were full of fallacies, and that, if certainty were indeed discoverable in mathematics, it would be in a new kind of mathematics,
20 with more solid foundations than those that had hitherto been thought secure. But as the work proceeded, I was continually reminded of the fable about the elephant and the tortoise. Having constructed an elephant upon which the mathematical world could rest, I found the elephant
25 tottering, and proceeded to construct a tortoise to keep the

elephant from falling. But the tortoise was no more secure than the elephant, and after some twenty years of very arduous toil, I came to the conclusion that there was nothing more that I could do in the way of making mathematical knowledge indubitable. Then came the First World War, and my thoughts became concentrated on human misery and folly. Neither misery nor folly seems to me any part of the inevitable lot of man. And I am convinced that intelligence, patience, and eloquence can, sooner or later, lead the human race out of its self-imposed tortures provided it does not exterminate itself meanwhile.

On the basis of this belief, I have had always a certain degree of optimism, although, as I have grown older, the optimism has grown more sober and the happy issue more distant. But I remain completely incapable of agreeing with those who accept fatalistically the view that man is born to trouble. The causes of unhappiness in the past and in the present are not difficult to ascertain. There have been poverty, pestilence, and famine, which were due to man's inadequate mastery of nature. There have been wars, oppressions and tortures which have been due to men's hostility to their fellow-men. And there have been morbid miseries fostered by gloomy creeds, which have led men into profound inner discords that made all outward prosperity of no avail. All these are unnecessary. In regard to all of them, means are known by which they can be overcome. In the modern world, if communities are unhappy, it is because they choose to be so. Or, to speak more precisely, because they have ignorances, habits, beliefs, and passions, which are dearer to them than happiness or even life. I find many men in our dangerous age who seem to be in love with misery and death, and who grow angry when hopes are suggested to them. They think that hope is irrational and that, in sitting down to lazy despair, they are merely facing facts. I cannot agree with these men. To preserve hope in our

world makes calls upon our intelligence and our energy. In those who despair it is very frequently the energy that is lacking.

The last half of my life has been lived in one of those painful epochs of human history during which the world is getting worse, and past victories which had seemed to be definitive have turned out to be only temporary. When I was young, Victorian optimism was taken for granted. It was thought that freedom and prosperity would spread gradually throughout the world by an orderly process, and it was hoped that cruelty, tyranny, and injustice would continually diminish. Hardly anyone was haunted by the fear of great wars. Hardly anyone thought of the nineteenth century as a brief interlude between past and future barbarism. For those who grew up in that atmosphere, adjustment to the world of the present has been difficult. It has been difficult not only emotionally but intellectually. Ideas that had been thought adequate have proved inadequate. In some directions valuable freedoms have proved very hard to preserve. In other directions, specially as regards relations between nations, freedoms formerly valued have proved potent sources of disaster. New thoughts, new hopes, new freedoms, and new restrictions upon freedom are needed if the world is to emerge from its present perilous state.

(About 830 words)

(From: BERTRAND RUSSELL: *Reflections on my Eightieth Birthday*, 1956.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

2	bulk	30	indubitable	39	sober	81	potent
11	scepticism	35	self-imposed	45	inadequate		
20	hitherto	36	exterminate	65	epochs		

2. Here are ten words and phrases from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

17 fallacies	lies	41 fatalistically	fatally
23 constructed	made	43 ascertain	certify
28 arduous toil	hard work	52 communities	people
34 eloquence	rhetoric	67 definitive	definite
39 issue	result	74 interlude	interval

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

12 passes for knowledge; 12 open to; 33 the inevitable lot of man; 37 a certain degree of; 47 morbid miseries fostered by gloomy creeds; 48 profound inner discords; 49 of no avail; 61 makes calls upon; 72 haunted by; 75 adjustment to.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What was the final result of the writer's attempts to find out whether anything could be known?

(b) In line 21, the writer says 'as the work proceeded'. What 'work' is he referring to here?

(c) What does the writer mean when he says, in line 39, that the happy issue has grown more distant?

(d) Into what three major types does the writer classify the causes of unhappiness?

(e) How do those who reject hope justify this attitude, according to the writer?

(f) What does the writer give as the real reason why people despair?

(g) What examples does the writer give of the world getting worse?

(h) What examples does he give of past victories which had seemed to be definitive having turned out to be only temporary?

(i) Why have the people the writer mentions in line 75 found adjustment to the world of the present difficult?

(j) Why does the writer say that new restrictions upon freedom are needed?

5. Rewrite lines 23 to 30 (from 'Having constructed an elephant . . .' to 'making mathematical knowledge indubitable') *without* referring to the fable of the tortoise and the elephant.
6. This piece is a good example of clear, incisive argument. Illustrate this by listing the steps into which the writer divides his search to find out whether anything can be known. Do not use more than 60 words.
7. From line 30 ('Then came the First World War') onwards, descriptions of things and attitudes the writer considers bad alternate with descriptions of ones he considers good (e.g. lines 58 and 60. *Bad*: 'They think that hope is irrational and that, in sitting down to lazy despair, they are merely facing facts.' *Good*: 'I cannot agree with these men. To preserve hope in our world calls upon our intelligence and our energy.') Go through lines 30 to 63, tracing this alternation between good and bad.

24

THE CONFUSION OF ENGLISH PROSE

ENGLISH DOES NOT RUN on its own rails, like French, with a simply managed mechanism of knobs and levers, so that any army officer or provincial mayor can always, at a minute's notice, glide into a graceful speech in celebration of any local or national event, however unexpected. The fact is, that English has altogether too many resources for the ordinary person, and nobody holds it against him if he speaks or writes badly. The only English dictionary with any pretension to completeness as a collection of literary precedents, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is of the size and price of an encyclopaedia; and pocket-dictionaries do not distinguish sufficiently between shades of meaning in closely associated words: for example, between the adjectives 'silvery', 'silvern', 'silver', 'silvered', 'argent', 'argentine', 'argentic', 'argentous'. Just as all practising lawyers have ready access to a complete legal library, so all professional writers (and every other writer who can afford it) should possess or have ready access to the big *Oxford English Dictionary*. But how many trouble about the real meanings of words? Most of them are content to rub along with a Thesaurus—which lumps words together in groups of so-called synonyms, without definitions—and an octavo dictionary. One would not expect a barrister to prepare a complicated insurance or testamentary case with only *Everyman's Handy Guide to the Law* to help him; and there are

very few books which one can write decently without consulting at every few pages a dictionary of at least two quarto volumes—*Webster's* or the shorter *Oxford English Dictionary*—to make sure of a word's antecedents and meaning.

- 30 To write English perfectly is impossible in practice: occasional ambiguities or slight improprieties of phrase are discoverable in every book—there has never been a writer who did not have some blind spot in his reading eye. Even to write it well is difficult. The alternative chosen by those
35 who cannot carry on their daily business without constantly writing reports, demands and orders is a dialect of limited vocabulary with no pretence to the literary graces, designed as a vehicle of restricted meaning. 'Officialese', 'legal English' and 'business English' merge into one another as the
40 general service dialect of impersonality, for use in every case where people are not private individuals but merely (according to the context) the public, the electorate, the parties concerned, age groups, man power, personnel, consumers.
(About 400 words)

(From: R. GRAVES & A. HODGE: *The Reader over Your Shoulder*, Jonathan Cape, 1943.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

9 pretension	22 so-called	38 officialese
13 associated	24 testamentary	42 electorate
15 practising	26 decently	
20 content	29 antecedents	
21 lumps	31 improprieties	

2. Here are five words and phrases from the passage, each with another word or phrase opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by the word or phrase opposite it on the right?

4	graceful	gracious
19	trouble	worry
30	impossible in practice	practically impossible
35	carry on	continue
43	man power	labour

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

1 run on its own rails with a simply managed mechanism of knobs and levers; 3 at a minute's notice; 7 holds it against him; 12 shades of meaning; 16 have ready access to; 20 rub along with; 36 a dialect of limited vocabulary with no pretence to the literary graces; 38 a vehicle of restricted meaning; 39 the general service dialect of impersonality; 42 the parties concerned.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- How does the writer of this piece contrast the French officer or mayor with his English-speaking opposite number?
- What excuse has the average English speaker for speaking and writing badly, according to the writer of this piece?
- How does a 'collection of literary precedents' help writers?
- Why is (i) a Thesaurus and (ii) a pocket-dictionary insufficient for a professional writer?
- Why are most writers nevertheless content to rub along with a Thesaurus and a pocket-dictionary?
- What part does *Everyman's Handy Guide to the Law* play in the argument put forward by the writer of this piece?
- What does the writer of this piece mean when he says that 'there has never been a writer who did not have some blind spot in his reading eye'?
- What characteristics of 'officialese', 'legal English' and 'business English' does the writer of this piece mention?

5. State, in not more than 20 words, what advice the author of this piece gives to professional writers.

6. State, in not more than 30 words, what those who are not professional writers, but who require English for their work, do to overcome the difficulties mentioned in this piece.

25

SELECTED SNOBBERIES

ALL MEN ARE SNOBS about something. One is almost tempted to add: There is nothing about which men cannot feel snobbish. But this would doubtless be an exaggeration. There are certain disfiguring and mortal diseases about
5 which there has probably never been any snobbery. I cannot imagine, for example, that there are any leprosy-snobs. More picturesque diseases, even when they are dangerous, and less dangerous diseases, particularly when they are the diseases of the rich, can be and very frequently are a source
10 of snobbish self-importance. I have met several adolescent consumption-snobs, who thought that it would be romantic to fade away in the flower of youth, like Keats or Marie Bashkirtseff. Alas, the final stages of the consumptive fading are generally a good deal less romantic than these ingenuous
15 young tubercle-snobs seem to imagine. To anyone who has actually witnessed these final stages, the complacent poeticizings of these adolescents must seem as exasperating as they are profoundly pathetic. In the case of those commoner disease-snobs, whose claim to distinction is that they suffer
20 from one of the maladies of the rich, exasperation is not tempered by very much sympathy. People who possess sufficient leisure, sufficient wealth, not to mention sufficient health, to go travelling from spa to spa, from doctor to fashionable doctor, in search of cures from problematical
25 diseases (which, in so far as they exist at all, probably have

their source in overeating) cannot expect us to be very lavish in our solicitude and pity.

Disease-snobbery is only one out of a great multitude of snobberies, of which now some, now others take pride of place in general esteem. For snobberies ebb and flow; their empire rises, declines, and falls in the most approved historical manner. What were good snobberies a hundred years ago are now out of fashion. Thus, the snobbery of family is everywhere on the decline. The snobbery of culture, still strong, has now to wrestle with an organized and active low-browism, with a snobbery of ignorance and stupidity unique, so far as I know, in the whole of history. Hardly less characteristic of our age is that repulsive booze-snobbery, born of American Prohibition. The malefic influences of this snobbery are rapidly spreading all over the world. Even in France, where the existence of so many varieties of delicious wine has hitherto imposed a judicious connoisseurship and has led to the branding of mere drinking as a brutish solecism, even in France the American booze-snobbery, with its odious accompaniments—a taste for hard drinks in general and for cocktails in particular—is making headway among the rich. Booze-snobbery has now made it socially permissible, and in some circles even rather creditable, for well-brought-up men and (this is the novelty) well-brought-up women of all ages, from fifteen to seventy, to be seen drunk, if not in public, at least in the very much tempered privacy of a party.

Modernity-snobbery, though not exclusive to our age, has come to assume an unprecedented importance. The reasons for this are simple and of a strictly economic character. Thanks to modern machinery, production is out-running consumption. Organized waste among consumers is the first condition of our industrial prosperity. The sooner a consumer throws away the object he has bought and buys another, the better for the producer. At the same time, of

course, the producer must do his bit by producing nothing but the most perishable articles. 'The man who builds a skyscraper to last for more than forty years is a traitor to the building trade.' The words are those of a great American contractor. Substitute motor car, boot, suit of clothes, etc., for skyscraper, and one year, three months, six months, and so on for forty years, and you have the gospel of any leader of any modern industry. The modernity-snob, it is obvious, is this industrialist's best friend. For modernity-snobs naturally tend to throw away their old possessions and buy new ones at a greater rate than those who are not modernity-snobs. Therefore it is in the producer's interest to encourage modernity-snobbery. Which in fact he does so—on an enormous scale and to the tune of millions and millions a year—by means of advertising. The newspapers do their best to help those who help them; and to the flood of advertisement is added a flood of less directly paid-for propaganda in favour of modernity-snobbery. The public is taught that up-to-dateness is one of the first duties of man. Docile, it accepts the reiterated suggestion. We are all modernity-snobs now.

(About 790 words)

(From: ALDOUS HUXLEY: *Music at Night and Other Essays*, Chatto and Windus, 1949.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

4	disfiguring	36	unique
7	picturesque	38	booze-snobbery
11	consumption-snobs	43	branding
16	complacent poeticizings	43	brutish solecism
23	spa	53	exclusive
26	lavish	67	gospel
35	wrestle	80	reiterated
35	low-browism		

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

4	mortal	human	27	solicitude	soliciting
14	ingenuous	ingenious	39	malefic	malevolent
17	exasperating	annoying	45	odious	hated
21	tempered	qualified	65	contractor	undertaker
24	problematical	unknown	79	docile	gentle

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

12 in the flower of youth; 25 in so far as; 29 take pride of place in general esteem; 30 ebb and flow; 34 on the decline; 42 imposed a judicious connoisseurship; 45 a taste for; 46 making headway; 51 very much tempered privacy; 53 has come to assume an unprecedented importance; 56 production is out-running consumption; 57 the first condition; 61 do his bit; 71 at a greater rate; 74 to the tune of.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- What types of snobbery does the writer deal with in this piece?
- What types of snobbery does he mention that are the exact opposites of each other?
- How do the emotions aroused in the writer by consumption-snobs differ from those aroused in him by rich disease-snobs?
- What is the snobbery of family?
- Why does the writer use the word *even* in 'Even in France (repeated twice: lines 40 and 44)?
- What does the writer mean by 'hard drinks' and what does he contrast them with?
- What is the novelty that the writer refers to in line 49?
- How do consumer and producer co-operate in modernity-snobbery?
- Why is it in the producer's interest to encourage modernity-snobbery?
- How do producers and newspapers help each other?

5. What reasons does the writer give for (a) not thinking consumption-snobs romantic?
(b) not feeling much pity for the commoner disease-snobs?
6. What are the writer's own views on (a) drunkenness and (b) modernity-snobbery? How does he make these views evident in this piece?
7. Rewrite the last paragraph of this piece as an advertiser intent on increasing sales of new goods would have written it.
8. In this piece the writer attacks the snobberies he dislikes (a) by applying to them condemnatory words such as *ingenuous* and *malefic*; and (b) by using irony (e.g. 'At the same time, of course, the producer must do his bit by producing nothing but the most perishable articles'). Give as many examples of (a) and (b) as you can find in the piece.

26

MALCONTENTS (PART 1)

ALTHOUGH I HAVE ABANDONED all intention of discovering the causes of melancholia, I have been interested in identifying some of its more curious symptoms, or characteristics. Of these I should select three effects that seem to be shared by all malcontents, whatever be their diverse temperaments and circumstances. These are: (1) a peculiar sense of insecurity: (2) guilt-feelings generated by a failure in self-fulfilment: and (3) a special inability to adjust themselves to reality. 5

The nervous condition created in them by their feeling of insecurity may, for all we know, be due, as the Behaviourists would suggest, to sudden loss of support when young: to having been dropped at the age of a few weeks by nurse or mother, or having been suddenly deprived of a mother's love, or to having been exposed in childhood to repeated bickering between mother and father. I have often been assured by school-masters or those who specialize in child psychology that in almost all 'difficult' cases one can trace a divided or an unhappy home. It is recommendable that parents should recognize how important it is to restrain their fury in the presence of their children and not to throw knives, spoons, plates, or puddings at each other when innocent little eyes are looking on. A morbid cell of insecurity may thereby be created and inflammation set up. 10 15 20

This feeling of insecurity is not, I think, confined to those 25

who have been born and bred in epochs of violent transition. It may be that those who when young have been infected by the wild hopes aroused by victories or revolutions, experience in the after-vacancy a special form of disillusion, 30 which may lead to cynicism, a distrust of human effort or intention, and a sense that all the uses of this world are unprofitable, flat and stale. It may be that those who in their youth live in constant apprehension of some atomic hecatomb are more inclined to pessimism than were those to 35 whom wars were sparkling adventures undertaken only by the naturally gallant and conducted with discriminating weapons. Yet on the one hand, cases of apparently causeless melancholy can be observed in the most static periods, such as those of the reigns of Queen Victoria or Louis Philippe, 40 when the climate of the time was one of rigorous optimism. And on the other hand, it is the middle-aged people, rather than the adolescents, who feel that the prospect of universal obliteration renders energy purposeless.

The sense of insecurity which is peculiar to the malcontent is a subjective emotion, and not one that is caused by 45 any definable apprehension. It produces a spiritual dizziness, akin to the physical dizziness experienced by those who, owing to some illness or accident, have lost the faculties of balance and are constantly afraid of tumbling off heights, 50 rolling into gulfs, or finding the pavement in Piccadilly gaping at their feet.

(About 490 words)

(From: HAROLD NICOLSON: *Journey to Java*, Constable, 1957.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

2	melancholia	29	after-vacancy	40	rigorous
3	identifying	32	flat	42	adolescents
5	malcontents	35	sparkling	45	subjective
14	deprived	38	static	46	dizziness
19	divided	40	climate	50	gulfs

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

3	symptoms	signs	33	apprehension	fear
12	suggest	argue	36	gallant	brave
16	bickering	arguing	36	discriminating	selected
20	restrain	control	49	tumbling	falling
30	cynicism	pessimism	51	gaping	opening

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

7 a failure in self-fulfilment; 8 to adjust themselves to reality; 23 A morbid cell of insecurity; 24 set up; 26 epochs of violent transition; 27 infected by; 33 atomic hecatomb; 42 the prospect of universal obliteration renders energy purposeless; 47 akin to; 48 the faculties of balance.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- (a) What does the writer of this piece consider to be by far the commonest cause of the malcontents' sense of insecurity?
- (b) Why should parents control their tempers when their children are present, according to the writer of this piece?
- (c) By what processes do victories and revolutions sometimes lead to a feeling of insecurity in the young?
- (d) Why does the writer of the above piece not believe that the malcontents' sense of insecurity arises only from the disappointment of hopes aroused during epochs of violent transition?

(e) Why might one expect the prospect of universal obliteration to affect adolescents more than middle-aged people?

5. The writer of the above piece thinks that the malcontent's sense of insecurity is (a) beyond his control, and (b) not caused by anything that one can identify. What are his arguments in support of (a) and what are his arguments in support of (b) in the last paragraph of the above piece?

6. Summarise the writer's argument in the last three paragraphs of the above piece, using your own words as much as possible. Do not use more than 150 words.

27

MALCONTENTS (PART 2)

THE SECOND COMMON SYMPTOM of seemingly causeless melancholy is the uneasiness engendered by failure to justify promise. Infant prodigies, and those horrible children who win television competitions, are especially subject to this disappointment. Those parents who are cursed with these early flowering plants should exercise great restraint in not flattering their prodigies in private or public; they should teach them that the fact that in March one may bloom as a prize daffodil makes it most unlikely that one will ramp as an Eucryphia in August. Expectation of success, if wholly unfulfilled, is certainly a melancholy situation and, since it is unbearable to face the fact that one is less gifted at the age of thirty-five than one was at the age of six, people seek to attribute this decline of mental power to some external event. I admit of course that indolence, indecision, and procrastination, with the persistent guilt feelings they generate, are a constant source of melancholy, but I should not call it causeless melancholy. The latter, if in fact it existed, would be far more horrible, opaque and frightening, and might be caused by a sudden collapse of will-power, or by realizing the awkward fact that some geniuses are really not so bright at forty as they were at six.

It is not the infant prodigies only, the scholarship boys, the double firsts¹ or the winners of the Prix de Rome, who are visited by disappointment at not having realized the

rewards promised by their early eminence; older men and women are also afflicted by these moods of self-reproach. Many of them attribute their failure to external circumstances, to the envy of others, to the fact that they were born
30 'unlucky', or to the ill-chance that they have never been accorded scope or opportunity for the full expression or expansion of their natural gift. There are some, however, who possess the discernment to realize that their character is weaker than their intelligence and that they lack the will-
35 power to give full effect to their talents. Such people suffer acutely from 'guilt' and attribute their failure in self-fulfilment to the parasite 'sloth', which has nibbled and discoloured the pink buds of their childhood and adolescence. It is indeed remarkable to find how frequently in the con-
40 fessions of malcontents the word 'guilt' and the word 'sloth' accompany each other on the same page. Yet in fact laziness is largely a matter of habit and requires but a slight movement of the will to be rendered unhabitual.

A third characteristic which can be observed as common
45 to all malcontents is an aversion from reality, or the inability to accept the external world. This is no ordinary problem of adjustment and is not identical with the accustomed conflict between the internal and the external, the individual and the community, the conformer and the rebel, the insider
50 and the outsider. It is something more unusual and mysterious than this. It is a fundamental ineptitude to take reality for granted or even to believe in its existence. Again and again have I found malcontents who not only doubt the reality of existence but suffer panic moments when they
55 doubt their own reality. 'Am I really I?' they ask themselves, and this question invariably arouses within them the twin passions of dread and despair.

I am prepared to admit that those who suffer from these terrifying disabilities and apprehensions may be of finer
60 temper than those who manage to dismiss such conflicts

from their consciousness. But I have not been considering respective merit: I have been concerned with trying to discover what it is that makes men and women unhappy without a recognizable reason. I am now convinced that there is always a reason, however obscure. It may happen that future physicians will discover some hormone the injection of which will mitigate these miseries. Meanwhile my compassion for malcontents has been much enhanced by reading so much about them. 65

(About 665 words)

(From: HAROLD NICOLSON: *Journey to Java*, Constable, 1957.)

¹ Students who have obtained first-class honours in both parts of their B.A. examination

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

1 seemingly	16 generate	49 conformer
2 engendered	19 opaque	57 dread
4 subject	27 afflicted	62 respective
14 attribute	45 aversion	65 obscure
15 indolence	47 adjustment	68 compassion

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by that opposite it on the right?

7 flattering	praising
15 procrastination	delay
26 eminence	height
33 discernment	understanding
36 acutely	sharply
37 nibbled	devoured
54 panic	frightened
59 disabilities	inabilities
67 mitigate	cure
68 enhanced	increased

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

2 failure to justify promise; 3 Infant prodigies; 6 exercise great restraint; 9 ramp as an Eucryphia; 14 decline of mental power; 31 accorded scope; 37 the parasite 'sloth'; 49 the insider and the outsider; 51 a fundamental ineptitude; 59 of finer temper.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) What disappointment does the writer of the above piece say that infant prodigies are subject to?

(b) Why does the writer use the word *cursed* rather than the word *blessed* in talking about the parents of infant prodigies?

(c) The writer refers to 'causeless melancholy' and then gives two possible causes for it. What are they?

(d) The writer distinguishes between two main types of older men and women who suffer from melancholy caused by failure to justify early promise. What are the two types?

(e) Why do the words 'guilt' and 'sloth' so often accompany each other on the same page in the confessions of malcontents?

(f) Why do malcontents ask themselves, 'Am I really I?'

(g) What arguments could one give in support of the claim that 'those who suffer from these terrifying disabilities and apprehensions are of finer temper than those who manage to dismiss such conflicts from their consciousness'?

5. Summarise the writer's arguments in the above piece. Do not use more than 120 words.

6. Point out cases where the same argument is repeated in rather different words in the first and second paragraphs of the above piece (e.g. 'people seek to attribute this decline of mental power to some external event' and 'many of them attribute their failure to external circumstances').

7. Criticise the logic of this piece and the preceding one ('Malcontents', Part 1).

28

TOTAL WAR IN THE DESERT

SOME OF THE EVIL of my tale may have been inherent in our circumstances. For years we lived anyhow with one another in the naked desert, under the indifferent heaven. By day the hot sun fermented us; and we were dizzied by the beating wind. At night we were stained by dew, and shamed into pettiness by the innumerable silences of stars. We were a self-centred army without parade or gesture, devoted to freedom, the second of man's creeds, a purpose so ravenous that it devoured all our strength, a hope so transcendent that our earlier ambitions faded in its glare.

As time went by our need to fight for the ideal increased to an unquestioning possession, riding with spur and rein over our doubts. Willy-nilly it became a faith. We had sold ourselves into slavery, manacled ourselves together in its chain-gang, bowed ourselves to serve its holiness with all our good and ill content. The mentality of ordinary human slaves is terrible—they have lost the world—and we had surrendered, not body alone, but soul to the overmastering greed of victory. By our own act we were drained of morality, of volition, of responsibility, like dead leaves in the wind.

The everlasting battle stripped from us care of our own lives or of others'. We had ropes about our necks, and on our heads prices which showed that the enemy intended hideous tortures for us if we were caught. Each day some of

us passed; and the living knew themselves just sentient pup-
 pets on God's stage: indeed, our taskmaster was merciless,
 merciless, so long as our bruised feet could stagger forward
 on the road. The weak envied those tired enough to die; for
 30 success looked so remote, and failure a near and certain, if
 sharp, release from toil. We lived always in the stretch or sag
 of nerves, either on the crest or in the trough of waves of
 feeling. This impotency was bitter to us, and made us live
 only for the seen horizon, reckless what spite we inflicted
 35 or endured, since physical sensation showed itself meanly
 transient. Gusts of cruelty, perversions, lusts ran lightly over
 the surface without troubling us; for the moral laws which
 had seemed to hedge about these silly accidents must be yet
 fainter words. We had learned that there were pangs too
 40 sharp, griefs too deep, ecstasies too high for our finite selves
 to register. When emotion reached this pitch the mind
 choked; and memory went white till the circumstances were
 humdrum once more.

(About 430 words)

(From: T. E. LAWRENCE: *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Jonathan Cape, 1926.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words and phrases another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

1 inherent	15 chain-gang	33 impotency
2 anyhow	16 content	34 spite
4 dizzied	16 mentality	35 endured
8 creeds	19 drained	36 gusts
9 ravenous	20 volition	38 hedge about
9 devoured	25 hideous	38 accidents
10 transcendent	26 sentient puppets	40 ecstasies
10 faded	27 taskmaster	41 register
13 willy-nilly	28 stagger	41 pitch
14 manacled	30 remote	42 circumstances

2. Here are ten words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by the one opposite it on the right?

3	indifferent	uninterested	31	toil	work
10	glare	glow	34	reckless	careless
16	ill	evil	39	pangs	pains
22	stripped	removed	40	finite	limited
26	passed	died	43	humdrum	dull

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

6 shamed into pettiness; 12 riding with spur and rein over our doubts; 22 care of; 23 We had ropes about our necks; 23 on our heads prices; 31 We lived always in the stretch or sag of nerves; 32 either on the crest or in the trough of waves of feeling; 35 physical sensation showed itself meanly transient; 36 Gusts of cruelty, perversions, lusts ran lightly over the surface; 42 memory went white.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- What were the 'circumstances' mentioned by the writer of this piece in his second line?
- What does he mean when he says that the army were 'without parade or gesture'?
- He and his companions were 'devoted to freedom' and yet 'sold themselves into slavery'. Explain this paradox.
- In what way had the writer and his companions become 'drained of morality, of volition, of responsibility'?
- What does the writer mean by the 'everlasting' battle?
- Who was 'our taskmaster'?
- What 'impotency' does the writer refer to in line 33?
- What does he mean by 'the seen horizon'?
- Why did he and his companions become careless of their own life and of others', and reckless of what spite they inflicted or endured?
- What does the writer describe as 'silly accidents'? Why does he describe them in this way?

(k) What does he describe as 'yet fainter words'? What does he mean by this expression here? Why does he use it?

5. The writer of this piece seeks to show how vast and overwhelming the effects of his experiences in the war in the Arabian desert were. Show how he uses language to achieve this effect.

6. The writer argues that conventional religious and moral beliefs appear to be meaningless in certain circumstances. Show how he does this.

29

LIFE IS LESS ACTIVE THAN ART

How SELDOM, Sparkenbroke reflected, had any woman the pregnant repose of a great picture! To suppose movement to be the essence of life was among humanity's most dangerous errors—an error into which, as the years passed, men fell more and more complacently. Life was less alive than art, for in life vitality was dissipated in a thousand irrelevant and contradictory movements; its essence seldom appeared. Tristan, as he came with Iseult to Cornwall from Ireland, must have asked himself continually what it was in her that set her apart from other women, so that her beauty seemed to him different in kind from theirs; and, though he looked at her with wonderful questioning from sunrise to dusk, he could give himself no answer, until one night at sundown, the sea very calm, he saw her in the forepart of the vessel, her back to him, her cheek engraved in light upon the eastern sky, and knew that what enchanted him was her power to gather all her spirit into the lines of her body. So marvellous was this discovery to Tristan—for he seemed to be looking through the flesh of Iseult into a life shining within her—that he also, without thought of himself, fell into a repose of gazing, and even when she had moved her head and seen him, they two were still for a long time, so quickened by their miracle that none of the language of the body could avail them. Rising at last, she said, like a child holding up its toy to be praised: Tristan, look at the sea, and they

looked, not at the sea but at each other, not at their appearances but at their selves as they were, so that if at any time a messenger should say: Iseult is dead, or: Tristan has forsaken Iseult, they might know, remembering this instant, 30 that he lied, though the messenger were Death himself. In that continuous life, which the womb and the grave do not divide, they had been solitary hitherto, and were no longer, but neither word nor touch could speak their recognition. They were dumb with love, and Sparkenbroke, standing 35 within them like a ghost, felt the long, delicious quiver of their flesh which, promising them all the rapture of appearances, yet mocked them, so that there were tears in Iseult's eyes. A puff of wind laid a pennon of hair across her lips when Tristan would have kissed them, and she laughed, as 40 though in laughter and tears she might discover a language that words denied her. But, like poetry and song, they spoke of nothing but the desire, which is in all men, for a language of silence; they had not that language itself; and under Tristan's kisses she sighed, thinking that only some folly 45 in herself—her newness to love, her inequality with him—prevented her from pouring her fullness into these kisses. Was he happy? she asked, and Tristan, perceiving, in what way she loved him and that beauty itself shone through her loveliness, fell into a tender awe and dared not kiss her again. 50 Under the ship, the water clucked and whispered and the deck was washed in that airy translucence which, on the open sea, shines in calm weather between dusk and darkness.

(About 550 words)

(From: CHARLES MORGAN: *Sparkenbroke*, Macmillan, 1950.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

2 pregnant	7 essence	28 forsaken
5 complacently	12 wonderful	35 quiver
6 vitality	14 forepart	38 pennon
6 dissipated	16 enchanted	41 denied
6 irrelevant	24 avail	50 clucked

2. Here are five words and phrases from the passage, each with another word or phrase opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word or phrase on the left was replaced by the one opposite it on the right?

11 kind	degree
12 dusk	sunset
22 quickened	enlivened
39 would have kissed	wanted to kiss
49 awe	amazement

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

10 set her apart from; 15 engraved in light upon; 17 gather all her spirit into the lines of her body; 20 fell into a repose of gazing; 23 the language of the body; 31 which the womb and the grave do not divide; 33 speak their recognition; 36 the rapture of appearances; 42 a language of silence; 51 washed in that airy translucence.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

(a) Does Sparkenbroke prefer women who have the repose of pictures, or women who are full of movement? Why?

(b) What is the significance of *must* in 'must have asked himself' in line 9?

(c) What was it that set Iseult apart from other women?

(d) What was the *miracle* the writer mentions in line 23?

(e) What does the writer mean when he says that Tristan and Iseult were 'so quickened by their miracle that none of the language of the body could avail them'?

(f) How would the memory of 'this instant' enable Tristan and Iseult to know that the messenger lied?

(g) Why does the writer say that the long, delicious quiver of their flesh mocked them?

(h) What does he mean when he says that Sparkenbroke was 'standing within them like a ghost'?

(i) Why were there tears in Iseult's eyes?

(j) Did Tristan and Iseult succeed in communicating in a 'language of silence'? What did Iseult think was the reason for this?

5. The writer of the above piece says, 'Life was less alive than art, for in life vitality was dissipated in a thousand irrelevant and contradictory movements; its essence seldom appeared'. What exactly does he mean by this? How does what he says about Tristan and Iseult illustrate this statement?

6. The writer of the above piece seeks to make the love of Tristan and Iseult appear beautiful, miraculous and portentous. How does he do this?

30

THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

WHERE THERE IS MUCH DESIRE to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this city. What some lament of, we rather should rejoice at, should rather praise 5 this pious forwardness among men, to reassume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again. . . . And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects 10 and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude, honest perhaps, though over-timorous, of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to 15 persuade me.

First, when a city shall be as it were besieged and blocked about, her navigable river infested, inroads and incursions round, defiance and battle oft rumored to be marching up even to her walls and suburb trenches; that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly taken 20 up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reformed, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, even to a rarity and admiration, things not before discoursed or written of, argues at first a singular goodwill, contentedness and confidence in your prudent 25

foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives itself to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who, when Rome was nigh besieged by Hannibal, being in the city, bought that piece of ground at no cheap rate whereon Hannibal himself encamped his own regiment.

Next, it is a lively and cheerful presage of our happy success and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rational faculties, and those in the acutest and the pertest operations of wit and subtlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is; so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has, not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversy and new invention, it betokens us, not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs, and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue, destined to become great and honourable in these latter ages.

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye do then, should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this city; should ye set an oligarchy

of twenty engrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how. 65

If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild and free and humane government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us, liberty 70 which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarefied and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged, and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly 75 pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the founders of our true liberty.

(About 760 words)

(From J. MILTON: *Areopagitica, A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England*, 1644, as edited by L. E. Lockwood, and published by George Harrap & Co., 1912.)

QUESTIONS

1. Give for each of the following words another expression of similar meaning to that found in the passage.

4	sect	35	vital	56	prognosticate
4	schism	37	plight	60	yet
11	solicitude	39	wherewith	61	famine
12	over-timorous	42	betokens	63	bushel
12	vex	42	degenerated	72	rarefied
24	argues	44	wax	73	enfranchised
24	singular	48	methinks	73	enlarged
30	nigh	48	puissant		
33	presage	50	mewing		

2. Here are five words from the passage, each with another opposite it. How would the meaning be changed if the word on the left was replaced by the one opposite it on the right?

17	infested	invested
50	locks	hair
54	timorous	fearful
56	gabble	chatter
70	counsels	advice

3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases.

3 knowledge in the making; 8 to reassume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again; 12 in this behalf; 13 malicious applauders of our differences; 17 inroads and incursions round; 20 taken up with; 23 even to a rarity and admiration; 27 derives itself to; 36 in the acutest and the pertest operations of wit and subtlety; 39 sprightly up; 51 kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; 52 purging and unscaling her long-abused sight; 53 at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; 60 an oligarchy of twenty engrossers; 74 lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves.

4. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible.

- (a) What is the relationship the writer of this piece claims to exist between sect and schism, on one hand, and the thirst after knowledge, on the other?
- (b) What is it that some lament of, according to the writer?
- (c) What is the forwardness he mentions?
- (d) Of what do the reasons which the writer mentions in the last few words of his first paragraph persuade him?
- (e) Who (or what) is (or are) 'taken up with the study of highest and most important matters'?
- (f) Of what verb (or verbs) is *things*, in line 23, the object?
- (g) What is the subject of *argues*, in line 24?
- (h) Whom does *their*, in line 28, refer to?
- (i) Whom does *his*, in line 29, refer to?
- (j) What is the subject of *being*, in line 30?

- (k) How does the story about Rome and Hannibal help the writer's argument?
- (l) What does *it*, in line 37, refer to?
- (m) What does *it*, in line 42, refer to?
- (n) Who is 'not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay'?
- (o) What is the subject of *casting*, in line 43?
- (p) What pangs does the writer refer to in line 44?
- (q) What nation is the writer referring to in line 48?
- (r) What does the writer symbolise under the images of the sun ('the full midday beam' and 'the fountain itself of heavenly radiance') in paragraph 4; and whom do the 'timorous and flocking birds' symbolise?
- (s) What sort of suppression is the writer discussing in paragraph 5?
- (t) How does the writer show how 'they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves'?

5. Explain briefly, in your own words, what the two reasons which the writer mentions in the last few words of his first paragraph are.

6. In Milton's day, it was considered good style to use 'periodic' sentences (i.e. ones in which the meaning was not complete until the end of the sentence) as much as possible. An example is the second sentence in paragraph 3 of this piece, which begins 'For as in a body . . .' (line 34), and is not grammatically complete until 'skin of corruption' (line 44), the rest of the sentence being 'loose' (the opposite of 'periodic'). Give other examples from this piece.

7. In addition to the predilection for 'periodic' sentences, this piece contains other signs that it is written in an older form of English than that now generally current. Examples are (a) words used with a different meaning from those with which they are generally used nowadays (e.g. *inventing*, *pertest*, *enlarged*, *apprehensions*); (b) words used in constructions in which they are no longer found in present-day English (e.g. 'of them that vex in this behalf'; 'even to a rarity and admiration'; 'derives itself to . . .'); and (c) grammatical constructions which

are now obsolete (e.g. 'as his was, who . . .'; 'so sprightly up, as that it has . . .'). List as many cases in which the English of this piece differs from present-day English as you can, and give for each the way in which the same thing would be said in present-day English.

8. This is a closely reasoned, and yet vehement and highly rhetorical piece of political propaganda. Show how the writer tries to win Parliament over by flattery; by appeals to religious sentiment, to classical learning and to the national interest; by suggesting that the introduction of a censorship would damage Parliament itself; and by suggesting that those who supported censorship were absurd and foolish, while those who opposed it were wise, clever, brave and cheerful.

